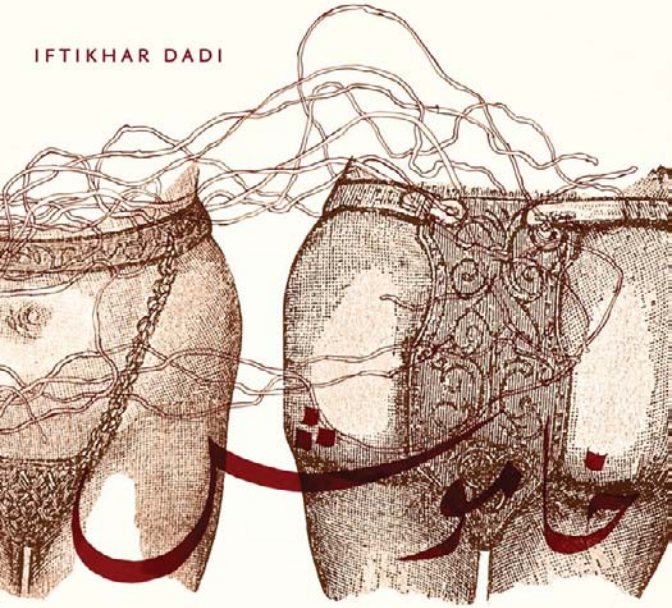
IFTIKHAR DADI



Modernism

AND THE ART OF MUSLIM SOUTH ASIA

Modernism and the Art of Muslim South Asia

ISLAMIC

CIVILIZATION

& MUSLIM

NETWORKS

Carl W. Ernst &

Bruce B. Lawrence,

editors

MODERNISM AND THE ART OF MUSLIM SOUTH ASIA

IFTIKHAR DADI

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Although every effort has been made to secure permissions to reproduce the images, the provenance of some works remains unknown. If the location of these works is brought to my attention, I will gladly provide acknowledgment in subsequent editions.

NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

This book is intended for a wide readership. Accordingly, three conventions have been broadly adopted here in order to offer a simplified and readable transliteration of Urdu, Persian, and Arabic terms.

1. All Urdu terms are generally transliterated according to the 2007 *Annual of Urdu Studies* guidelines, with all diacritical marks omitted except for the ʿain (ʿ) and the hamza (ʾ) and with the *izafa* construction given as -i rather than -e.

2. In order to render online searches in Worldcat more convenient, the bibliography has been generally transcribed according to Library of Congress guidelines.

3. Proper names that have gained currency in English are transcribed according to their common English usage. (This creates some discrepancies when searching in the Library of Congress databases; for example, Sadequain is listed as Sadiqain.)

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Modernism and the Art of Muslim South Asia

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INTRODUCTION

MODERNISM IN SOUTH ASIAN MUSLIM ART

This book traces the emergence of modernism by artists associated with "Pakistan" since the early twentieth century, but it is not a broad history of a national art, nor does it seek to offer a complete account of the selected artists considered here. It traces one influential genealogical trajectory—the emergence of artistic subjectivity in relation to a constellation of conceptual frameworks, *nationalism*, *modernism*, *cosmopolitanism*, and "*tradition*." Although artists contributed to national life by forming new institutional frameworks for the patronage, exhibition, and reception of modern art—a labor that is an inextricable aspect of their personae—the addressee of their art cannot be simply equated with a Pakistani nationhood marked by aporias and impasses as a consequence of complex historical developments. Pakistani nationalism has provided painting with no "ancient mythopoetic or iconographic anchorsheet," a critic noted as early as 1965.[1] Rather, artists drew selectively from broader Persianate and Islamicate cultural and religious legacies,[2] yet also situated themselves as modern cosmopolitans addressing the quandaries of the self in modernity. In this book, therefore, the nation-state functions as only one frame of meaning in designating the artists' complex practices: in a larger sense, this project can also be viewed as a deconstructive study of nationalism that attempts to fashion a new narrative of a transnational South Asian Muslim modernism from within a national art history.

Postcolonial scholarship has demonstrated that translating concepts initially developed for the study of metropolitan cultures for the study of the postcolonial context is a persistent and unavoidable issue.[3] While acknowledging the limitations of using broad descriptive markers, this book offers fresh interpretations of the terms "nationalism," "cosmopolitanism," "modernism," and "tradition" by inflecting, stretching, estranging, and translating their metropolitan meanings to characterize the art and writings of the artists and their critics.[4] Informed by postcolonial theory and globalization studies, this account views modernism as inherently transnational, rather than as national or even international. Indeed, Andreas Huyssen has advanced the term "modernism at large," by which he refers to "crossnational cultural

forms that emerge from the negotiation of the modern with the indigenous, the colonial, and the postcolonial in the 'non-Western' world."[5] The terms "cosmopolitanism" and "tradition" gesture toward the complexity of modern South Asian Muslim subjectivity, whose genealogy includes fragments from Persianate humanism, Hindu and Buddhist mythology, the orientalist construction of the discipline of Islamic art, colonial governmentality, nineteenth-century theological and modernist reform, modern pan-Islamism, twentieth-century metropolitan and transnational artistic modernism, mid-twentieth-century nationalism and developmentalism, and contemporary debates on race, gender, and globalization.

The term "tradition" is especially vexed and liable to be seen simply as opposed to the modern. This study argues against such a reduction and demonstrates how artists strategically reworked fragments of classical Islamic tradition into modern formulations characterized here by the term "modern Islamic art." The category of "Islamic art" usually denotes artistic practices over a specific geographic area *before* the advent of modernity, but this definition is not found in Islamicate intellectual and discursive formulations. Primarily an allochronistic orientalist construction forged during the age of colonialism, Islamic art as a discipline was viewed through European hierarchies of fine/applied art and by denial of any relationship to modernity. "Islamic art" marks a catachresis. It is precisely this *antifoundationalism* of the discipline of Islamic art, along with the discursivity of other Islamicate disciplines, that provided artists with a "tradition" that they investigated in their practice with an increasingly incisive understanding rather than remaining limited to reworking subject matter and style. It may be noted that academic work on *modern* Islamic art is lacking; indeed, many scholars of classical Islamic art view the term itself with suspicion.[6] This study, however, argues that a decolonization of "Islamic art" was taken up as a critical modernizing *practice* by the artists examined here, who drew upon "tradition" by remembering lived practice, by turning toward its discursive articulations in poetry, literary criticism, ethics, and art. Modern artistic practice unceasingly seeks adequate discursive and aesthetic ground but never quite secures it; this crisis-ridden quest characterizes an important facet of its modernism and contributes to its ongoing development.

This book undertakes extended readings of the work of key artists between the early decades of the twentieth century and the present—Abdur Rahman Chughtai paintings in relation to Mughal aesthetics and late colonialism from the 1920s onward, works of mid-century artists Zainul Abedin, Shakir Ali, and Zubeida Agha with reference to transnational modernism and national

independence, Sadequain's oeuvre in the context of Islamic calligraphy during the 1960s and 1970s, and the works of Rasheed Araeen and Naiza Khan with reference to issues of race and gender since the late 1970s.[7] The epilogue examines how emergent contemporary practice continues to grapple with the quandaries of tradition and subjectivity. All the artists studied here have sought to situate their practice in the broader intellectual and social contexts of their eras and have also devoted considerable effort to building new institutional frameworks of exhibition, patronage, and reception for modern art.

The relation between modern artistic practices and the intellectual history of Muslim South Asia is of particular significance for this study, undertaken through an analysis of the art and writings of twentieth-century artists and their critics. One of its larger goals is to exemplify the richness of intellectual and discursive legacies of important regions of non-Western modern artistic practice, rather than seeing all such artists as "hybrid" and migrant figures drawing only on lived traditions or in mimicry of Western art. The conceptions of "hybridity," "mimicry," and "in-betweenness" have prompted important scholarly work over the last two decades, but the generality and imprecision of these conceptions has become a methodological straitjacket in purportedly accounting for the work of all modern non-Western artists.[8] A particularly common understanding of "hybridity" fails to distinguish between lived traditions and discursively articulated ones. "Mimicry" suggests that the primary motivation for artistic practice was with reference (and sly opposition) to the West, which I hope to show is not primarily the case for artists studied here. And although the "in-between" space is seen as beyond enunciation and articulation (and although recognizing that all good art enacts singular dimensions of meaning that cannot be fully articulated), this book, by contrast, does argue for analytical and conceptual comprehension of many of the artists' concerns, provided one accounts for their intellectual trajectories.

The discipline of art history has until recently largely omitted consideration of modern art outside Western canonical developments. There are few existing academic studies on artistic modernism in South Asia, for example,[9] but recently, there has emerged a growing interest in the scholarly study of non-Western modern art.[10] In discussing artistic modernism in Muslim South Asia, this book hopes to contribute to the emerging body of scholarship by employing recent comparative and interdisciplinary approaches.[11] It provides for a departure from previous histories of South Asian modern art, many of which are inscribed within the horizon of the national and do not acknowledge the full force of transnationalism until after the advent of globalization

in the 1990s. It also differs from other anthropologically inflected studies of non-Western art by its strong emphasis on discursive, intellectual, and conceptual articulations. Histories of intellectual developments primarily focus on elite discourses (even when they urge toward broader social engagement), and this study is no exception in this regard. But while it is a gross mistake to simply equate intellectual debates with all significant social and cultural developments, they also should not be sidelined in the name of an ersatz populism. Moreover, one cannot study modern non-Western societies and cultures without assessing the considerable labor its intellectuals and artists have undertaken to articulate their place in modernity.

This work specifically traces the genealogy of the South Asian Muslim artistic self and the emergence of global and public Muslim subjectivities in recent times. It locates a set of contingent relations between artistic subjectivity and social frameworks over the course of a century—these relations are neither teleologically inevitable nor continuous in a historicist sense, but have been enacted fitfully by artists' creative praxis. The subjectivities traced here are not reducible to other political and ethical subject formations, which would require other critical accounts. And not being historically and structurally stable or unified, these subjectivities defy easy summarization, but they are above all viewed here as psychic and sociocultural artifacts. Accordingly, South Asian Muslim identity in this study primarily refers to contestations over sociocultural self and society, rather than to questions of adequacy of religious belief or adherence to ritual.[12]

By largely refusing to address the social world directly during the early decades, artists experimented with subjecthood and artistic form as metaphors and allegories of a deeper and more nuanced exploration of the quandaries of modernity than did either the programmatic formulas of the "progressive" leftists of the 1930s and 1940s or the emergent nationalist and religious rightist ideologies from the 1940s onward that had gained new valences by the late 1970s. These subjectivities are not reducible to "liberal humanism" either but enact a difficult process of working out antinomic relations between the self and society. By refusing easy ideological positions, artists sought not only to reimagine the past but also to create new analogues for conceiving a future that could not be easily articulated under existing closures. Indeed, this study shows how a deeper engagement with the social world has emerged in recent art as a result of an extended artistic debate and praxis, whose genealogy is traced here. Wendy Brown has perceptively noted that "genealogy neither prescribes political positions nor specifies desirable futures. Rather it aims to make visible why particular positions and visions of the future occur to us."[13]

Aesthetic, ethical, and political effects of emergent artistic subjectivities are neither fully calculable in advance, nor do they necessarily follow or seek to overtly and immediately resist existing hegemonic values. Their importance lies precisely in highlighting antinomies of self and society beyond formulaic positions and in fostering new imaginaries beyond the urgency of immediate events.

This book also bears upon the study of contemporary global art, marked by the rise during the last two decades of dozens of artistic biennials around the globe. Contrary to some studies that claim that the works of contemporary "biennial" artists simply spectacularize an exotic difference by participating in the superficial global culture of late capitalism, this book offers a longer durée, intellectually nuanced understanding of artistic subjectivities. Although artists do participate in broader contemporary dilemmas, a proper accounting of their work still requires a deeper engagement with their specific intellectual and processual trajectories. This has remained a challenge for scholarly understanding of much modern and contemporary global art in which historical and intellectual context remains largely unexplored—and which this book hopes to partially remedy by tracing one significant thread in its formation.

To launch into the extended examination of the book's conceptual framework, it is instructive to begin with an example. Abdur Rahman Chughtai's etching *Mughal Artist* (ca. 1930s) depicts the profile of an artist holding what appears to be an Indian Mughal miniature painting, which shows a female figure against an empty background, enclosed in a wide, illuminated border (Figure I.1).[14] Because the miniature is folded in half, we are prevented from seeing whether any other figure, text, or compositional device accompanies her, although one suspects that the figure would not be alone, as it is placed only in the right half of the miniature. The Mughal Artist clasps the miniature with exaggeratedly long fingers, a handling of anatomy that parallels other exaggerations in Chughtai's work since the mid-1920s, such as the drawn-out neck, the distorted rendering of the ear and the arms, and the voluminous swell of the Mughal Artist's chest. The Mughal Artist is placed among a landscape of rocks, flowering plants, and trees whose sparse linear and rhythmic composition recurs in the shape of the Artist's turban and the decorative motif of the Artist's outer garments. He looms as a separate figure in the foreground, yet also remains an integral part of the landscape, as the linearity of his scarf and the botanical motifs on his tunic echo the surrounding foliage and rocks. The miniature's border, composed of foliate arabesque patterns,

FIGURE 1.1. *Abdur Rahman Chughtai,* Mughal Artist, *ca. 1930s. Etching. 24.7 × 20.9 cm. (Collection of Nighat and Imran Mir. Reproduced with permission of Arif Rahman Chughtai, © Chughtai Museum Trust, Lahore.)*

FIGURE I.2.
Muhammad Ali, Poet in a Flower Garden *(detail), Mughal period, ca. 1610–15, northern India. Opaque watercolor and gold on paper. 15 × 15.7 cm (with borders not shown). (The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Francis Bartlett Donation of 1912 and Picture Fund 14.663. Photograph © 2010 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.)*

and the rendering of the miniature figure in the same linear manner as the Artist suggests continuity among the landscape, the artist, and the painted miniature as inhabiting a shared aesthetic realm united by their linear, ornamental handling.

Chughtai's etching clearly draws upon seventeenth-century Mughal miniatures, such as *Poet in a Flower Garden* (ca. 1610–15) (Figure I.2) and *Khan Khanan Abd ar-Rahim* (ca. 1626) (Figure I.3), which depict Mughal nobility.[15] Chughtai's portrait, however, foregrounds its own stylistic character at the expense of the specific historical identity of the portrait. Indeed, we are not informed about the identity of the Mughal Artist; rather, the portrait begins to approach allegoresis, depicting the unplaceable time of the Mughals as one characterized by enviable aesthetic accomplishment. Is this allegory of the Mughal Artist intended as a self-portrait of Chughtai? If so, how does one become a "Mughal artist" in early twentieth-century Lahore, long after the end of the Mughal era? We may further compare Chughtai's *Mughal Artist* with *Daulat the Painter and Abd al-Rahman the Scribe* (ca. 1610) (Figure I.4), in which miniature artists and calligraphers are busy at work as artisans in an interior. Indeed, these arts of the book would have been performed in a *kitabkhana*, a royal bookmaking atelier that included activities, such as bookbinding, generally considered among the applied or decorative arts. Chughtai's *Mughal Artist* is not occupied in working as an *artisan* but now emerges as a contemplative and philosophical *artist*, a thinking, reflecting subject.[16]

Chughtai is widely considered the first major modern Muslim artist in

FIGURE 1.3. *Hashim*, Khan Khanan Abd ar-Rahim *(detail)*, *Mughal period, ca. 1626. Opaque watercolor and gold on paper. 39.9 × 25.6 cm (with borders not shown). (Freer Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., F1939.50a.)*

FIGURE 1.4. *Daulat*, Daulat the Painter and Abd al-Rahman the Scribe, *Mughal period, ca. 1610. Opaque watercolor and gold on paper. 22.5 × 14 cm. (© The British Library Board, all rights reserved, 2010. Or. 12208, f. 325b.)*

South Asia. His artistic oeuvre shows a remarkable consistency since the 1920s in referencing the Mughal painting tradition. Chughtai filters this influence through his stylistic markers, rendering his later work immediately recognizable, which unmistakably invokes Mughal painting and yet plays up its stylistic individuality. His work performs a double maneuver, referencing "tradition" yet also enacting the artist as a modern subject. Chughtai's works ceaselessly seek a common ground, a continuity, with tradition. The very act of striving to secure this ground over the chasm of the centuries of decline of Mughal painting, while acknowledging the impossibility of its recovery by deploying a style that is consistently and unmistakably that of Chughtai, paradoxically marks him as the first significant South Asian Muslim artist in the modern era.

Lack of good critical work on a major artist like Chughtai is indicative of the state of scholarship on modern Muslim South Asia, which has focused primarily on political, social, religious, and literary developments. Beginning in the twentieth century, however, the traditional emphasis on textuality in South Asian Muslim intellectual life was fundamentally reconfigured to accommodate a new relationship with the visual arts. The advent of colonial modernity in nineteenth-century South Asia was tightly intertwined with new articulations of knowledge, authority, and culture, which arose concurrently with the rise of print culture and also with the formation of a new institutional domain of fine art by the Calcutta-based Bengal School of Painting at the beginning of the twentieth century. By the 1930s, Indian artists had embarked on a sustained engagement with modernism, in a context of dizzying social and political change, which included decolonization, the rise of mass media, and the onset of developmentalism following the national independence of India and Pakistan in 1947. Despite his nostalgia, Chughtai inaugurates a kind of artistic modernity in Muslim South Asia, which was pursued by successive modernist artists after national independence. More recent artistic practice has productively engaged with developments in contemporary global art. This study, traversing the periods of colonialism, national independence, and globalization, argues for the artists' engagement with modernity since the early twentieth century by demonstrating how their aesthetic and social concerns refer both to modernism and to their understanding of "tradition" itself as transnational.

Before launching into a detailed discussion of modernism, cosmopolitanism, nationalism, and tradition, a brief summary of historical developments in Muslim South Asia is necessary. The idea of tradition embraces

the intellectual and cultural resources of the Persianate cosmopolitan world of the Mughal empire since the sixteenth century. Muslim rule in key regions of India became associated with a wider Persianate and Islamicate culture, which became pronounced at the zenith of the centralizing Mughal empire between the mid-sixteenth century and the end of the seventeenth century and its aftermath. The dissolution of the empire in the eighteenth century gave rise to the increasing entanglement of British mercantile and political interests and weaker regional rule in many parts of India. British colonialism at its high noon in India from the mid-nineteenth century onward deployed technologies of classificatory governmentality to understand and shape Indian society itself. This, associated with the rise of decolonizing nationalism among Indians from the late nineteenth century onward, led to the emergence of "Hindus," "Muslims," and other groups as marking distinct identities, above, and sometimes against, regional, ethnic, and linguistic specificity. Elements of resurgent Hindu identity began to view the Indian nation in terms of territorial integrity and a valorized golden Hindu and Buddhist past—in which Muslims were often characterized as marauding invaders. The later nineteenth century also brought a growing awareness by the South Asian Muslim intelligentsia of their being reduced to minority status and the formation of Muslim identity in relation to pan-Islamic ideas. Modern Muslim identity has accordingly been fashioned as "minoritarian" in Indian nationalist terms. But, on the other hand, it has also created complex affiliations with a larger Muslim religious and cultural past and present, in which the Persianate cultural past and the transnational Islamic revivalist movements active since the late nineteenth century have cultivated powerful nonterritorial imaginaries. It also encompasses the reformist movements allied with the rise of print culture that flourished in the wake of the Indian Mutiny of 1857. These movements sought to shape Muslim life in India by initiating religious and educational reform and by modernizing Urdu language and literature. The treatment of "tradition" in this study includes the rise of progressive cultural politics in South Asia during the 1930s and the growth of literary journals and criticism. Urdu poetry—in particular, the poetry of Ghalib and Iqbal—provided many of the artists considered here with imaginative tropes. Tradition also includes the rich iconography of Hindu and Buddhist South Asia drawn on by artists such as Chughtai, even as he articulated his art as "Islamic."

The departure of the British in 1947 from the territories of colonial India created the independent and divided nation-states of India and Pakistan. The latter was made up of territories in the eastern and western Indian prov-

inces that held Muslim majorities. The process involved much bloodshed and the transfer of very large numbers of people, as Hindus from the areas designated as Pakistan moved to India and many Muslims moved to Pakistan. Modern independent India emerged as a result of anticolonial struggle by Indian nationalists, but the independence of Pakistan was arrived at without a similar struggle against the British. Rather, it was fashioned out of the fear of domination of Muslims by Hindus. The appellation "Pakistan" is pure invention, possessing no historical resonance—the founding of the nation itself was irresolvably caught between providing simple "affirmative action" type of protections for economically and politically backward Muslims and transnational aspirations beyond the realm of politics itself. Moreover, not all Muslims agreed with the goals of the Pakistan movement itself. Indeed, many distinguished leaders and elites continued to view themselves as Indians and opted to remain in India. But most Muslims of colonial India were trapped in this dilemma of having to belong to India or to Pakistan, an impossible choice—that of minoritization in India or exclusivist nationalism in Pakistan.[17] In 1971, East Pakistan seceded from Pakistan to form Bangladesh, a consequence of the economic and cultural domination by the West Pakistan wing. The majority of South Asian Muslims since have been divided equally between Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan. Arguably, these uncertainties and quandaries of South Asian Muslim identity are themselves emblems of its vexed modernity.

MODERNISM, MODERNITY, AND TRADITION

The "modern" is hardly a self-evident category, even in metropolitan scholarship, usually refracting into the pair of terms "modernity" and "modernism." The former typically denotes social transformation—especially in the wake of the Industrial Revolution—while the latter denotes a range of artistic practices characterized above all by anti-illusionism, medium-specificity, and reflexivity.[18] The terms "modernism," "modernity," and the "avant-garde" continue to demarcate central problems in the study of modern art but are rarely discussed in the context of non-Western art.[19] Following Dipesh Chakrabarty's discussion of how non-Western history as an academic subject remains in thrall to paradigms developed for the study of Europe, one sees how the close association of modernity and modernism *as* the West serves as an invisible template of comparison for non-Western modern art.[20] By the early twentieth century, however, the trope of the "modern" increasingly dominated the making and the study of South Asian art, a process that finds

parallels in other regions as well. As recent studies continue to show, modern art was enacted on a transnational scale during the twentieth century, but canonical studies of modern and contemporary art and visual practices have continued to assume the centrality of Western art in specific geographic and cultural sites.[21] Simultaneously, Western modern practices have also been understood as constituting the "universal" modern. Consequently, modern non-Western art is seen as inevitably lacking both a fully realized modernist subjectivity and a cultural authenticity. Non-Western artists are viewed as failing to measure up to the aesthetic standards of the purported tradition of the artist that is invariably *always* situated in the premodern era, and their works are also seen simply as a belated and impoverished derivative response to Western modernism.[22] This is a well-established debate within postcolonial scholarship. Tabish Khair, for example, questions the premise of looking at the modern in isolation from capitalism, as he clearly sees the latter as the underlying motor of aesthetic and political change—the capitalist West exercises a monopolistic "patent" on the deployment of the terms "modernity" and "modernism": "Modernism or modernity is and (under Capitalism) will always be, by definition, identical with the hegemonic capitalist culture. But it is not modernism or modernity that creates the hegemonic capitalist culture in its own image; it is the capitalist culture that determines what we see and recognize as modernism and modernity."[23] Khair also cogently characterizes the problem of "tradition" and "modernity" in relation to Eurocentrism: "Western modernity is seen as a response to *Western* tradition. But in the non-West, modernity is seen as disjunct from tradition. Modernity is something that is traced to another space and time—either Europe or the effects of European colonization. The 'fragments' of the 'non-European' present come from the two separate/d spaces of 'tradition' (read: the recent 'native past') and 'modernity' (read: the recent Euro-American past)—and, hence, one or the other space has to be forcibly vacated in any conception of a holistic future. That is the tragedy of 'modernity' in the non-West."[24] Indian art critic Geeta Kapur also recognizes this dilemma: "Imposed on the colonized world via selective modernization, modernism transmits a specifically bourgeois ideology. With its more subtle hegemonic operations, it offers a universality while obviously imposing a Eurocentric (imperialist) set of cultural criteria on the rest of the world."[25] Despite these reservations, however, Kapur recognizes the critical and affirmative potential of the term "modernism" as it is practiced in postcolonial India. "Yet, as modernism evolves in conjunction with a national or, on the other hand, revolutionary culture it becomes reflexive."[26] This book corroborates Geeta Kapur's insight but also modifies

it by demonstrating that modernism of the artists considered here indeed becomes reflexive, *despite* its vexed relationships to Pakistani nationalism, as none of the artists discussed in this book comfortably inhabit territorial nationhood. Chughtai's *Mughal Artist* is neither national nor revolutionary—it negotiates a cosmopolitan tradition yet asserts the reflexivity of the Artist-as-Chughtai figure, alerting us to some of the complexities of modernity in Muslim South Asia beyond the stock binary divides of equating the West with modernity and the non-West with its lack.

If modernism is understood to reference cultural production that is experimental and reflexive, that inhabits new patronage arrangements, that seeks new audiences and venues and is generally concerned with exploring the predicament of South Asian Muslims in modernity by drawing on a ruined tradition that nevertheless persists as an imaginative force, then the works discussed in this book certainly undertake that project. In order to secure a better understanding of the reflexive quality of modernism, South Asian Muslim artistic practice needs to be contextualized by the insights afforded by formalist analysis. It may be noted that formalism has often been viewed, especially by Pierre Bourdieu and his followers, as perpetuating the disinterested autonomy of metropolitan modernism, and thus as retrenching the inequalities of power by silently and invisibly disregarding institutional inequalities. While acknowledging the considerable force of this critique, this study retrieves formalist analysis because of its critical analytical possibilities for art that has been created with a nonmimetic and nonreferential relationship to social history.

THEORIZING MODERNISM

In his influential essay "Modernist Painting," American critic Clement Greenberg has argued that modernist painting pursues purification and the deeper exploration of modalities specific to painting, even as this long-term trend remains invisible to the practitioners themselves. Greenberg's formulation traces a process spanning decades, if not a century, in which painters, beginning with Manet in the mid-nineteenth century, looked at the achievements of their predecessors as continuing to develop more intensively the possibilities opened up when the aims of painting were no longer tied to illusionism. Greenberg's formulation offers a reading in which no sharp break with the past is posited. Rather, modernism emerges as an autonomous practice by advanced painters when painting no longer has to serve ends other than those of medium-specificity and reflexivity.[27]

In his appreciative critique, art historian T. J. Clark has interpreted Greenberg's formulation to emphasize that modernism embarks on this autonomous course because the European bourgeoisie of the later nineteenth century dismantled aristocratic art and invented mass forms of expression that were easily understood by all social groups, in order to extend their reach over larger segments of society. As an extended and inward response to the age of kitsch, modernism carves out an aesthetic utopia by persistently engaging with and preserving the difficulty and density of high culture.[28] Clark claims that Greenberg's account of modernism, which brackets out the social world and assumes a conflict-free and teleological optical valence, is fundamentally incomplete. Greenberg is unable to account for hesitancies and contingencies in modernism's development and fails to consider modernism's complex engagement with the social.[29] For Clark, if modernism no longer has a constituted ruling or aristocratic class to address, it seeks its elusive addressee in the social order through ceaseless experiment.[30] Clark's formulation has the merit of combining a formalist reading of modernist art, one that continues to grant autonomy to technique and practice, with one that is also cognizant of how the social world constantly presses upon artistic form. His account is salutary in highlighting the roles of patronage and addressee, without sacrificing the relative independence of artistic experimentation, and thus it refuses to reduce modernist art to merely a simple reflection, affirmation, or negation of modernity. A sophisticated reading of modernist art, it incorporates the insights of social history and formalism, methods that have otherwise been seen as antithetical.

There remain, however, a number of troubling issues in Clark's account, as it is premised upon developments in modern European history and it focuses exclusively on canonical European works. Clark's analysis relies on Western Marxist thought and the travails of anarchist and socialist ideals in the West, effectively precluding global political, social, and aesthetic developments during the twentieth century, which include but are not restricted to the rise of anticolonial movements, the onset of decolonization, and the presence of an increasing number of migrant intellectuals in metropolitan centers. The failures of Western anarchical socialism seen in isolation from the rest of the world lend a melancholy tone to Clark's otherwise brilliant readings, and his more recent book on modernist art is suffused with this elegiac tenor, conveying an impression of the blockage and death of modernism and of cultural politics altogether.[31]

Charles Altieri affords an important critique of Clark that views modernism as a profound response to *difference*.[32] Altieri questions Clark's reliance

on artistic form as a failed attempt to address the social and insists instead that the value of modernism cannot be reduced to its quest to find a nonexistent or nonconstituted addressee. Altieri faults Clark for wanting to diminish modernist art as ultimately referential of the social and for failing to grasp that modernism is precisely not realism.[33] Rather, for Altieri, it is because modernist artists realized that all referential and realist tropes in modern art reduced its role as a handmaiden to bureaucratized, nightmarish politics that they felt empowered to create works that enact a metaphoric utopia within the work itself. The role of modernist art is not to continue seeking Clark's elusive social addressee but to suggest metaphoric alternatives, especially in an age when differences across the globe cannot simply be subsumed under one set of referential or illusionist tropes, or even under a particular social formation:

> Perhaps the modernists knew better. Perhaps they realized what is only now becoming painfully clear—that any assertion of values based on particular social and political structures is doomed to seem partial and to create *differends* whose grievances cannot be heard within the dominant structure. Once we enter a world where cultural differences are deeply valued and where there is no clear way to adjudicate among those differences, it may be incumbent on art (as well as on philosophy) to locate and foster modes of political consciousness sufficiently abstract to locate values and principles in the very possibility of making commitments to different structures. . . . It may be wisest to surrender the fantasy that art ought to provide effective forms for a particular social imaginary. . . . [The] critical force [of modernism] seems to me still to depend on two features . . . very much worth keeping alive—its awareness of how playfulness itself can take on ethical import and its faith that any force able to sustain a compelling imaginative life as a direct, perceptible feature of a work of art has claims on us that extend beyond the work's specific historicity.[34]

Like Clark, Altieri focuses his analysis on canonical works yet emphasizes the playful, constructed, and metaphoric dimensions of modernism and its passage beyond referencing a particular social landscape or instantiating itself in a singular political horizon. This allows for a more open consideration of noncanonical modernism in the periphery than does Clark's formulation, which remains tied to developments within Europe since the mid-nineteenth century. Theorizing a modernism that does not demand an immediate social referent is cogent for the purposes of this book, as early modern South Asian Muslim art since the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries bears closer

analogues to abstracted forms, such as the lyric *ghazal* poetic tradition and Sufi conceptions of the universe.[35] Twentieth-century modernism draws on this classical Islamic art, broader Islamicate poetic and philosophical articulations, and post-cubist transnational modernism, all of which are nonrealist forms. Accordingly, the works analyzed in this volume do not primarily attempt to represent the social mimetically. This general disinclination for direct social address in artistic modernism in Muslim South Asia was stressed in comments made by the important modernist painter and teacher Shakir Ali during a discussion with artists, critics, and filmmakers published in 1974.[36] Participants who were not painters questioned why modernist artists in Pakistan failed to develop social consciousness in their art. In his reply, Shakir Ali pointed out that while literature, which is broadly understood, might express social concerns in a more accessible manner, modernist painting evokes pain, frustration, and pleasure, which is not easily comprehensible to the wider public. Above all, Shakir Ali questions the very demand for accessibility and direct social reference:

> Someone once remarked to Picasso that his paintings were beyond understanding, to which Picasso replied why it was necessary to understand the song of a bird? We [modernist artists] acknowledge that we are unmoved by national and social events. If we do happen to respond to them, this response becomes merely urgent and passing [with no lasting impact]. For example, during wartime [with India in 1965], Intizar Husain [a prominent Urdu writer] had written that while bombs were falling outside, Shakir *sahib* had withdrawn to his home, and was busy painting pictures of flowers and the moon. Its true that I had blacked out my studio [sealed my studio in order to continue working there] and was indeed painting moon and flower motifs, as it was belief [*iman*] that flowers bloom in both India and Pakistan, and the moon shines on Pakistan but also on the graves of my ancestors in Rampur [India]. I was therefore involved in creating an alternative expression of the war.[37]

This passage is remarkable in several respects, not least for Shakir Ali's summary dismissal of the need to situate modernism in realist modes and in national and social frameworks even during a grave national emergency. Nevertheless, he appears to offer a stock "humanist" explanation of the thematic content of his own activities (Plate 10). Yet this book demonstrates that the desire for social address cannot be simply be forever bracketed (which Shakir Ali himself had also recognized elsewhere) but persists—resurfacing in the works of Zainul Abedin, Sadequain, Rasheed Araeen, and Naiza Khan. The

readings offered here are thus formalist in the sense that the social and the historical are usually enacted on the picture plane as a struggle over form and in new patronage and addressee relationships, rather than depicted as theme or content. Here, in further support of my claim, it may be noted that even artists such as Chughtai, who work with the figure, move away from the possibilities of realism and representation available in later Mughal painting, even while drawing from this Mughal tradition. This is evident in the exaggerated stylization of *Mughal Artist* (Figure I.1), arguably relatively less "realist" than seventeenth-century Mughal painting from the Jahangir era, which was imbued with realism to a marked degree, in part due to later Mughal appreciation of European works, as seen in *Jahangir Preferring a Sufi Shaikh to Kings* (ca. 1615–18) (Figure I.5).

This study frames its arguments in broad sympathy with Andreas Huyssen's appraisal of recent approaches to postcolonial modernism.[38] Huyssen notes that postcolonial theory and globalization studies enable new ways of writing histories of modernism that are *transnational* rather than *national* or even *international*: "Despite the celebrated internationalism of the modern, we still experience obstacles in the very structures of academic disciplines, their compartmentalization in university departments of national literatures, and their inherent unequal power relations in acknowledging what I call *modernism at large*, namely, the crossnational cultural forms that emerge from the negotiation of the modern with the indigenous, the colonial, and the postcolonial in the 'non-Western' world." Huyssen further notes the inadequacy of "traditional approaches that still take national cultures as the units to be compared and rarely pay attention to the uneven flows of translation, transmission, and appropriation."[39] From this perspective, one can productively revisit "varieties of modernism formerly excluded from the Euro-American canon as derivative and imitative, and therefore inauthentic." Accusations of one-way European influence and the belatedness of the modernism of non-Western modern art have been persistently used to close off comparative investigation of modern art produced beyond the canonical centers of Paris, Berlin, New York, and a few other cities. Huyssen's emphasis on the geographical spread of modernism, "which cut[s] across imperial and postimperial, colonial and decolonizing cultures," being a process in which "metropolitan culture was translated, appropriated, and creatively mimicked in colonized and postcolonial countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America" and which "supported the desire for liberation and independence," provides a more nuanced way to understand the salience of modernism beyond the metropole than simply privileging technical advancement and attack on tradition by avant-

FIGURE 1.5. *Bichitr,* Jahangir Preferring a Sufi Shaikh to Kings *(detail), Mughal period, ca. 1615–18. Opaque watercolor, gold, and ink on paper. 25.3 × 18.1 cm (with borders not shown). (Collection of the Freer Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., F1942.15a.)*

gardisms.[40] In the absence of powerful but outdated institutional and academic codes against which to rebel, the avant-garde simply cannot exist, as modern art requires complex institutional frameworks—which are primarily metropolitan—for its legibility. Innovation in sites without such established frameworks, therefore, consists in *creating new institutions* (rather than in attacking nonexistent ones). It is striking that all the artists examined in this study have dedicated considerable effort to establishing new institutions, by publishing journals, creating exhibition spaces, teaching, and running art foundations. Above all, one needs to underscore the powerfully affirmative potential of modernism itself in stimulating new imaginations during the decolonizing era rather than searching solely for modernist experimentation or avant-gardism or for projects that carry an overt sociopolitical charge.

South Asian modernism clearly developed under the tutelage of metropolitan modernism yet cannot be fully understood by reference solely to it. An understanding of its opening toward metropolitan modernism but also the assertion of its historicity, its openness toward commensurability but also its positing of incommensurability—in short, the doubled character of its historical and contemporary valences—is required. This work may be understood as "cosmopolitan," a fraught term used here not to fetishize its placelessness but rather to define its relationship to transnational modernism and to also mark how it draws on a memory of the early modern and modern cosmopolitanism of Muslim South Asia.

COSMOPOLITANISM AND MUSLIM SOUTH ASIA

The term "cosmopolitanism" has a long history and has recently been the subject of considerable scholarly debate. For our purposes, the recent discussion on cosmopolitanism may be divided into two broad streams. The first view privileges the European genealogy of the term, stretching back to Greek philosophy, political developments during the Roman empire, vernacularization of European languages, Enlightenment conceptions expounded by Immanuel Kant, debates on the weakening nation-state and globalization since 1990, and political and institutional developments in global civil society and universal human rights.[41] The second view seeks to detach its moorings from its European anchor and to see how the term might characterize imaginative affiliations in other geographic areas, in which formal institutional or political affiliation is not necessarily central. Sheldon Pollock, who has examined the world of Sanskrit during the first millennium, has forcefully critiqued the narrowness of the first conception of cosmopolitanism as Eurocentric.

Pollock emphasizes that in sites such as the Sanskrit world, encompassing South and Southeast Asia, cosmopolitanism was not theorized as such, but its effects were clearly visible as practice over a vast geographic and temporal realm, by creating imaginative and expressive ideas of a world beyond the local, rather than in installing institutional structures and political articulations.[42] Roxanne Euben, in her recent study of Muslim travel accounts, has similarly traced a "particularly rich countergeneology of cosmopolitanism"[43] spanning the premodern period into the nineteenth century.[44] Her gleanings and summary of how various scholars of Islam have understood this affords a convenient capsule account:

> What this genealogy does do is foreground the *umma* as a cosmopolitan social imaginary . . . a history in which extensive Muslim social networks largely flourished independently of territorially based state power, where institutions of the state constituted but one of "the dense knots where many network lines crossed." Here is a civilization whose preeminence in the Middle Periods was secured less by the systematic consolidation of political power than by the extensive social and cultural mobility of Muslims bearing a moral code at once fixed and flexible enough to apply "whenever Muslims were to be found in sufficient numbers, being dependent upon no territorial establishment nor even on any official continuity of personnel, but only on the presence of Muslims committed to it, of someone at least minimally versed in it to see its application." Here is a "global civil society" before the age of globalization, one constituted in part by a principle of free movement that simultaneously confounded state aspirations to total control and conferred legitimacy to those empires willing and able to safeguard routes of trade and pilgrimage. And here is an organizing image of "networks" that actually corresponds to the "conceptual world of Islamic culture . . . [where] society is an ever living, never completed network of actions."[45]

Not only was the *umma* conceived via this networked transnational imaginary during the premodern era—but it remains "undimmed and in some ways even intensified (albeit in complex ways) by the advance of European colonialism, the rise of the nation-state, and now the march of globalization."[46] Euben's view is also shared by recent scholarship, as exemplified by the volume *Muslim Networks from Hajj to Hip Hop*, consisting of essays exploring modern and globalized networks and part of a new book series devoted to understanding Islamic civilization as networked.[47]

The cosmopolitanism of the artists examined in this book is thus doubled,

emerging from their translation of historical and modern Muslim cultural forms that were themselves cosmopolitan and from a second translation of transnational modernism. In order to adequately study the cosmopolitanism of art during the twentieth century, Kobena Mercer emphasizes the "three-fold interaction among non-western artists, minority artists within the West and western art movements that have engaged with different cultures." According to this view, cosmopolitanism is not flattened into a single register but retains a perspective on differentiation according to specific artistic encounters and geographical locations. Moreover, he cogently notes, "the term is not being proposed as an evaluative or judgmental banner heading (in the sense that it is a good thing if you have it, too bad if you don't)." Complementing this view, I stress the need for understanding conceptual formations and practices that were prevalent *prior* to Western colonialism and the need to trace their subterranean transformations in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Only if this genealogy is accounted for in North Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia can we do justice to Mercer's prognosis that "matters of cultural difference can now be moved on from the reactive critique of Eurocentrism and brought into a proactive relationship with a range of artistic traditions and lineages that are worthy of study in their own right."[48] The artists' relationship to transnational modernism is examined in subsequent chapters as it pertains to each artist. Here a broad summary of their engagement with Muslim consciousness in South Asia as it has been articulated since the late nineteenth century is traced.

Muslim intellectual and cultural life in South Asia since the early modern periods (sixteenth to eighteenth centuries) was decisively shaped by interaction and exchange with West Asia, creating a rich and vibrant cosmopolitan outlook.[49] Precolonial and early colonial South Asia cultural practices were important participants in a Persianate cultural universe, and this contribution increased in intensity during the Mughal period from the sixteenth century, as may be seen in poetry, literature, painting, and calligraphy. Persian was the language of bureaucracy and administration in India for several centuries from the Mughal era till the 1830s. Persian was also a privileged language of cultural expression for the North Indian elite well into the nineteenth century and even the twentieth century—indeed, the greatest poets of Urdu in the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, Ghalib and Iqbal, respectively, both composed what they deemed to be their major works in Persian. Since the time of Akbar (reigned 1556–1605), India had attracted a flow of Persian-speaking scholars and artists from West Asia, allowing India to be

more closely connected to Muslim intellectual life in West Asia. The extent of this participation in the Persianate world has yet to be fully explored, but historian Juan Cole estimates that, during its height in the late seventeenth century, the number of Persian speakers in South Asia outnumbered those living in Persia itself by a factor of seven.[50]

As an example of this cosmopolitanism in the early modern period, one might consider Mughal painting since Akbar's era.[51] The aftereffects of Timur's domination of Central Asia and Persia during the latter half of the fourteenth century resulted in the development of "an entirely new visual language under which the Timurids articulated their monarchical claims, religious commitments, and personal glory."[52] This new visual language developed in sites such as the Timurid *kitabkhana* (royal bookmaking workshop), which functioned as a highly influential design studio, producing designs for architectural facades, carpets, and decorative objects, along with its central function of producing illustrated and illuminated manuscripts and albums (*muraqqaʿ*) composed of calligraphy and painting.[53] The status of the painter, which until the fifteenth century had been generally considered lower than that of the calligrapher, grew in importance.[54] The Persian artist Kamal al-Din Bihzad, who lived during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, has become legendary, and for modern intellectuals and artists, such as Iqbal, Chughtai, Sadequain, and Shakir Ali, Bihzad serves as an antonomastic figure characterizing perfection in the art of painting.[55] During the Safavid dynasty (1501–1722), which followed that of the Timurids, the general status of painting rose further and acquired greater diversity and a degree of independence as an autonomous medium, rather than remaining confined to its earlier role as textual illustration.[56]

It was this later Timurid and Safavid Persian element that was brought to India in 1555 by the second Mughal emperor, Humayun, on returning from his exile in Iran and Afghanistan during 1544–55. The Safavid court of Shah Tahmasp received Humayun during his exile, where the latter also recruited Persian artists. After Humayun's recapture of Delhi, these Persian artists settled in Delhi and helped to establish bookmaking ateliers and train local artists.[57] His successor, the emperor Akbar, greatly expanded the royal support of the ateliers, leading to the flowering of the highly influential school of Mughal painting and bookmaking, which was patronized by the next two emperors, Jahangir and Shah Jahan, through the mid-seventeenth century.[58] During Akbar's later years, the character of painting changed, becoming less action oriented and more subdued, more naturalist and realist. Mughal painters were also keenly interested in learning from European painting tra-

ditions brought to India by the Jesuits and European ambassadors, which demonstrates another facet of their cosmopolitan outlook.[59] As Gregory Minnisale has argued in an analysis of a manuscript illustrated under Akbar, the Mughal painting repertoire was expanded to include European techniques and motifs, now utilized in complex compositional and semantic structures leading to greater reflexivity of Mughal art. "The Mughal response to European art was not slavish imitation but creative reinvention," he notes.[60] During the reign of the emperor Jahangir (1605 to 1627), this trend toward naturalism continued; painting relied less on narrative from Akbar's early years and focused instead on the external observation of nature and the specificity of individual portraiture, in addition to allegorical portraits of the emperor, such as in *Jahangir Preferring a Sufi Shaikh to Kings* (ca. 1615–18) (Figure I.5).[61] By this time, the aesthetics of Mughal painting had departed considerably from its initial Persianized formal mannerisms, and individual styles of various painters were appreciated for their particularities and their realism.[62] The emperor Shah Jahan (reigned 1628 to 1658) patronized a type of elevated jewel-like self-presentation, in which his own portrait depicts a "flawless visual facade," characterized by formality, which "achieved a perfection that functioned as a kind of heraldic art."[63] Later Mughal painting thus emphasized individualism in portraiture in a double sense—in the personal style of the artist and in realist depiction of the subject. With the ascension of the more religiously conservative Aurangzeb to the Mughal throne, painting lost a great deal of royal patronage, starting around 1668; instead it witnessed a partial dispersal to regional courts, which led to its relay into regional schools of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[64]

Another example of Indo-Persian cosmopolitanism is the scientific and scholarly contributions of Persianate intellectuals during the eighteenth century, studied by Tavakoli-Targhi. He has shown that scholars based in India made key contributions to the study of comparative linguistics and religion that directly informed European scholars, but the contributions of these Persianate scholars were effaced during "the late eighteenth-century emergence of authorship as a principle of textual attribution and accreditation in Europe." In addition, Tavakoli-Targhi has traced the keen interest Persianate scholars (many traveling to Europe) demonstrated in European scientific, philosophical, and social developments. His work conclusively documents that cosmopolitan intellectual and cultural life in South Asia, specifically in scientific and literary spheres, contributed to wider Persianate currents that were not confined to political borders but that unfolded in a prolonged

period of interaction with West Asia and with an awareness of and openness to European developments.[65]

Beginning in the later eighteenth century, reform movements in South Asian Islam increasingly turned away from Persianized Sufism and modes of education toward creating a new modality based on the cultivation of individualized morality. Due to the loss of political power, Muslim identity could no longer be supported by state patronage. Two consequences were the massive translation of Arabic, Persian, and English classical, religious, and secular texts into Urdu printed books and the creation of new educational institutions in the nineteenth century. Francis Robinson has argued that the *ʿulama* were central to this reform effort, but the wider availability of classical works in printed Urdu and the political inability of any institution to enforce its juridical and moral imperatives led to a fracturing of religious authority, leading to the rise of numerous sectarian movements. Reformist movements also articulated critiques of literary Persian's rhetoric and mystical tropes, conducting a linked series of reforms targeting Muslim religious and secular intellectual life during the middle and later nineteenth century: propagating through print a modernized vernacular expression in Urdu, identifying with Arabicized rather than Persianized Islam, and developing a new mode of ethics and observance of religious life under the institutional and juridical framework of colonial modernity. The Urdu language itself underwent reformation in a dramatic manner from the middle of the nineteenth century, discarding elaborate Persian rhetorical flourishes, now reshaped by expressive and realist modes made available from English, which included the novel, journalism, and new poetic structures and images. Reformed Urdu spread by a vigorous program of lithographic print, which allowed for a massive increase in the number and range of books and newspapers published since the later nineteenth century. In the realm of the fine arts, the close of the nineteenth century saw the virtual demise of miniature painting traditions, shorn of their patronage by courts and by loss of their place in manuscript illustration, as manuscripts were fully displaced by inexpensive printed books created by lithography. Painters ended up either illustrating stereotypical Indian scenes for British souvenir albums or turned to oil and canvas–based styles of British academic portraiture.[66]

The availability of print in vernacular Indian languages also led to the precipitation of religious-based identities that were reinforced by the classificatory modes of colonial governmentality. Materially and educationally, the Muslims now perceived themselves as falling far behind Hindus and other

FIGURE 1.6. Horse Race towards Civilization, *illustration in* Oudh Punch, *1881. (From Archibald Constable,* A Selection from the Illustrations Which Have Appeared in the Oudh Punch from 1877 to 1881 *[1881], plate 14.)*

groups in India. In contrast to the Muslims, these other groups had confidently emerged to take advantage of opportunities available under colonial modernity, whether in government service or in trade. A cartoon in an 1881 issue of *Oudh Punch* sarcastically depicts this crystallization of communities according to religion and ethnicity and their relative social status, in a *Horse Race towards Civilization* (Figure 1.6).[67] An Englishman, a Parsi, a Bengali (Hindu), and a Muslim, arranged on a racetrack by order of superiority, are depicted in stereotypical outfits and poses, racing on mounts whose bodily postures indicate their relative swiftness. The caption asserts the following:

ENGLISHMAN: *Rides like the wind.*
PARSI: *In a fine state.*
BENGALI: *Although he doesn't quite know how to ride, he manages with difficulty.*
MUSLIM KNIGHT: *His heart races, but his mount refuses to move.*

Although a Western-educated Muslim middle class did emerge in the later nineteenth century, much of which was employed by the government, Muslims continued to perceive themselves as trailing far behind the more educated and enterprising Parsi and Hindu communities. However, since the

later nineteenth century, better information and communication about the condition of Muslims in other regions of the world, especially those under or subject to British imperialism, and the increasing ease of travel under British rule helped to give rise to a reformulated transnational pan-Islamic consciousness, which created new imaginative and affiliative links among Muslims in India, Egypt, the Ottoman empire, and other areas.[68] Ironically, the quixotic and utopian character of pan-Islamism in India was a consequence precisely of the loss of Muslim political power. The Khilafat Movement (1919–24), the first mass movement in India in support of the Ottoman caliphate (a movement in which Gandhi played a major role), exemplifies an important expression of this pan-Islamic imaginary.[69] The poet Muhammad Iqbal's powerful articulation of an Islamic universalism during the first half of the twentieth century also shaped a cosmopolitan and universal consciousness in the Muslim intelligentsia.

Twentieth-century modernism in South Asian art developed with an awareness of the early modern Islamicate cosmopolitan world, but this relationship was also shaped by nineteenth- and early twentieth-century factors—the loss of symbols of political power in South Asia to colonialism beginning in the late eighteenth century, reaching its full dismemberment in the wake of the 1857 Mutiny, and the further loss of the external identificatory symbol of the Ottoman caliphate, which was dissolved in 1924. Twentieth-century artistic modernism revisits and renews the cosmopolitanism of the early modern era, but does so in a manner that self-consciously foregrounds the impossibility of inhabiting a continuous tradition. Rather than referencing the contemporary Muslim world beyond South Asia, especially when decolonization was beginning to bring about the rise of fractured and divided nation-states, South Asian Muslim modernist art draws selectively upon its own cosmopolitan tradition. Referencing this tradition involves a complex operation, in which tradition is lived and remembered practice in some cases, but is also available discursively, not only through the increasing availability of classical works in print but also as a result of orientalist art historical scholarship of Mughal and Islamic art. When drawing on modernist Western ideas and forms, South Asian Muslim modernism no longer participates as an equal, as might have been the case during the intellectual exchanges of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but does so from a position of institutional weakness.[70] Twentieth-century artistic cosmopolitanism not only references earlier cosmopolitanisms but also negotiates the poles of commensurability and participation in transnational modernism in an attempt to secure its own fraught location and voice.

DILEMMAS OF THE NATION

Late colonialism and political decolonization beginning in the twentieth century were deeply laden for Muslims in South Asia. Unlike nationalist struggles in which the nation was coherently imagined, the pressure toward minoritization of South Asian Muslims and their increasing perception of powerlessness in the face of Indian and Hindu nationalism led them to occupy political positions that were divided and unstable. The Khilafat Movement quixotically attempted to prevent the demise of the Ottoman caliphate and eventually led to increased polarization between Muslims and Hindus; this interlude exemplifies the conflicted position of the Muslim intelligentsia. Many influential public figures supported the Khilafat Movement, but out of its crucible emerged diverse trajectories. Some later joined the Indian nationalist struggle; others emerged from the experience as separatists. Still others were deeply skeptical of the aims of the movement from the beginning. In a recent work, Ayesha Jalal has argued at length that from the late nineteenth century until 1947, key terms such as *millat* (community) and *qaum* (nation) were sites of an extended struggle among the intelligentsia, many of whom continued to shift their views as the onset of decolonization in 1947 loomed closer. Jalal has also shown that, until the 1940s, Mohammad Ali Jinnah's demand for political representation for Muslims was not necessarily intended to carve out a separate nation-state. The political partition of British India in 1947 was deeply bound up with the vexed question of choosing clear sides in this highly charged and contradictory social space.[71] Indeed, Jalal has argued persuasively for recognizing individualized understandings among the Muslim intelligentsia of their political and social roles, understandings that cannot be captured by official Indian and Pakistani nationalist accounts. Celebrated poets, such as Faiz Ahmad Faiz, who wrote a deeply ambivalent poem on the onset of independence of Pakistan in 1947 and who was jailed during the 1950s by the Pakistani government for conspiracy, were hardly nationalist in a simple sense.[72] Official Pakistani history has been narrowly ideological even as many members of its intelligentsia were more skeptical, but even Indian Muslim scholarship has been viewed as self-censorious since 1947.[73] Rather than seeing these equivocations and shifts—and even the propagandistic and blustery claims by intellectuals—as expressions of insincerity, it is better to understand their positions as struggles to align their aspirations with difficult political realities—especially as expressed in the nation-state formation—which failed to supply an adequate aspirational horizon for numerous South Asian Muslim intellectuals before *and* after 1947.[74] Essentially, Mus-

lims were eventually forced to choose between becoming a minority under Indian nationalism or having charge of their own backward space. The sense of minoritization here follows Aamir Mufti's account of "culture, language, community, and identity as irreducible processes inherent in the transition to modern forms of culture and society, . . . a continuing process and recurring application of pressure at numerous points across the social field."[75] And Vazira Zamindar's research has shown how both India and Pakistan since 1947 deployed a set of elaborate—and often Kafkaesque—bureaucratic and juridical regimes over several years to sort out the paradoxes and contestations of residence, property, and citizenship, in order to establish "proper" national affiliation and belonging.[76]

Since the publication of Benedict Anderson's influential *Imagined Communities* in 1983, scholarship on nationalism has explored the distinctively imagined character of the idea of a nation.[77] Pakistan offers both an especially vivid example and a pointed counterexample in this regard. It openly betrays the constructed and contingent nature of the "national" even as it disputes many of Anderson's theses, especially his contention that the modern nation is a universal, secularized formation. This is especially evident when one undertakes a comparative analysis of the national question in India and in Pakistan, which have developed in markedly different ways. David Ludden has pointed out that the word "India" conflates the sense of India as a "civilizational entity" with the sense of India as a "nation-state."[78] This conflation has never been available in the appellation "Pakistan." To be a "Pakistani" is to evoke only the second of these identifications—a political affiliation to a crisis-ridden state. Indian and Pakistani nationalisms are not equivalent, and Pakistani art is marked by this qualitative difference. This renders the idea of "Pakistani-ness" as not so much civilizational as merely political and is thus much less resonant as an identifying marker than "Indian-ness." Recent scholarship has reopened the question of the problematic intersection of nationalism and identity. In the context of the imagined character of nationalism, the use of the term "Pakistan" to mean a nation (rather than to mean a state) is particularly slippery. To briefly summarize the historical context, Pakistan was carved out of British India in 1947. It was composed of the geographically divided East and West Pakistan, with the territory of Kashmir in dispute with India. The partition of British India led to massive migrations and set the stage for a series of hostile encounters between Pakistan and India, which still continue to take place as violent exchanges—in the form of hot and cold war, clandestine operations, and physical, rhetorical, and symbolic struggles.[79] The founding of Pakistan failed to resolve persistent quan-

daries about the position of Muslims in South Asia, a population that was now divided into three equal parts in West Pakistan, East Pakistan, and India after its 1947 independence. Pakistan experienced further loss of people and territory when the East Pakistan wing, containing the majority of the population, seceded in 1971 to form Bangladesh—following widespread civil unrest, its brutal suppression by the (overwhelmingly West) Pakistani army, and the breakout of war between India and Pakistan. The formation of Bangladesh immediately led to the further movement of refugees and migrants back and forth between the three countries and abroad. These losses have continued to exert a major, if unacknowledged, force on many intellectuals, including artists like Shakir Ali. Therefore, in the last six decades, the answer to the question of who a Pakistani might be has seen at least two large-scale shifts, and the ambiguities and hesitancies subsumed under the "national" have played out only too openly.

The persistence of difficult relations between India and Pakistan is thus symptomatic of the vexed issue of Muslim identity in modern South Asia, which affects the nature of Pakistani identity and makes any simple ascription of national affiliation deeply problematic.[80] Indeed, David Gilmartin has argued that the contradictions of the Pakistan nation-state project and the difference between the aspirations of its citizens and the goals of the elite "points us back to the continuing power in the modern world of the medieval models of state-society relations that defined Islam as a networked civilization."[81] Pakistani artists could not ignore the power wielded by the state, of course, especially during the first four decades of the country's independence. Even while artists were insufficiently interpellated into state ideology, they nevertheless relied upon the financial, institutional, and symbolic support that the Pakistani state provided—unsystematic patronage that depended on the individual relationship between state functionaries and the artist. This relationship is specific to each artist and is discussed in greater length in individual chapters.[82]

Due to minority status in India and Muslim memory of belonging to the larger Muslim world during the early modern Persianate and Islamicate cosmopolitanism and since the later nineteenth century under pan-Islamic movements, South Asian Muslim experience differs from other experiences of nationalism. In Pakistan, at least, none of the representational vehicles of imagination identified by Benedict Anderson—national language, the novel, census, map, and museum—are fully valid. For example, the insistence on Urdu as the national language, spoken by a minority of Pakistanis in 1947,

was in fact instrumental in the breakup of Pakistan in 1971 and continues to exacerbate ethnic tensions. No great national Pakistani novel exists in Urdu; indeed, Aamir Mufti has argued that Urdu literature in the twentieth century, as a minority artifact, excelled in fragmentary and extremely short forms that refused to offer a totalizing narrative.[83] Census remains a fraught undertaking in Pakistan due to tensions between ethnic groups. The map of Pakistan is not primordial in any sense; British colonial officials unacquainted with India drew it up only a few months before partition in 1947. Moreover, the loss of East Pakistan in 1971 and the ongoing Kashmir dispute continue to haunt the map of Pakistan. It is therefore not surprising that "the writing of history has been an important critical activity to the making of the nation in modern India," as Vazira Zamindar notes, "in striking contrast to Pakistan."[84] Finally, the museum as a repository of the national past has been a resounding failure in Pakistan because of its irrelevance to public life and because many of the most important monuments and treasures of Muslim heritage, such as the Taj Mahal and illuminated manuscripts, are primarily situated in India or housed in Western collections. "Pakistan" has thus largely failed to provide an adequate cultural aspiration for many of its intellectuals.

For all the above reasons, modernist art in Pakistan did not simply work out an agenda framed by nationalism, unlike perhaps Indian modern art, as Geeta Kapur has persuasively argued.[85] And while a case may be made for considering Indian Muslim artists, such as Maqbool Fida Husain, as primarily addressing the Indian national imaginary, such a case is infinitely more difficult to make for most Pakistani artists, certainly for the artists discussed in this book, who adopted a studied distance from Pakistani nationalism and have largely eschewed direct identification with it. Even in cases when the artist is patronized by the Pakistani state, the addressee is hardly ever the nation. Rather, these artists availed of the opening toward reflexivity and articulation of an alternative universe offered by transnational modernism but also investigated possibilities in the cosmopolitanism of early modern and modern South Asian culture. As Altieri has pointed out, modernism should not be understood as representing social formations or as finding a constituted addressee. Rather, modernist "works of art possess reality rather than refer to it."[86] But exploration of an alternative aesthetic and phenomenological world was available not only via modernism. Apart from textual and discursive referents, "Islamic art," a relatively new discipline, also provided another discursive "tradition."

MODERN ISLAMIC ART?

This book also undertakes to reformulate current scholarly ideas regarding *modern* Islamic art. The term "Islamic art" is arguably a catachrestic signifier (without adequate referent) even for the premodern era; it covers a vast geographic area for a period exceeding a millennium and is not primarily seen as a religious art, or even as made by or for Muslims, in this respect being "quite different from terms such as 'Buddhist art' or 'Christian art,' which are generally reckoned to deal specifically with the art of faith."[87] And, apart from architecture, its significant genres, which include calligraphy and the applied arts (for example, bookmaking, metalwork, ceramics, and textiles), fail to line up with primary Western fine art categories of sculpture and painting.

Even more significant is the question of Islamic art's conceptual legitimacy, for it is emphatically not a term that emerges from within Islamicate intellectual history—"the concept of a universalist 'Islamic art' remains specific to the West."[88] The term emerged fairly recently in the West through the activities of connoisseurs and orientalists since the mid-nineteenth century. Unlike literature and poetry, whose development and analysis can be undertaken by a critical examination of conceptions from within Islamicate intellectual life, there is no significant aesthetic theory that might inform the majority of what we consider to be Islamic art.[89] Although scholars have attempted to articulate the philosophical and aesthetic principles underlying Islamic architecture, applied arts, and painting, these are largely conceptions not found within the tradition itself. Moreover, these efforts have been partial and tendentious and have not succeeded in grounding the field with any degree of coherence. In the absence of internal criteria, Western connoisseurship and orientalist scholarship have defined the field, with the following implications:

1. Until recently, collection and display of Islamic art was largely a Western enterprise. Moreover, with the emergence of nationalism during the twentieth century, nation-states valorized the ancient past—Egyptian, Hittite, and Assyrian—more than objects and buildings from the Islamic era. This led to the neglect of Islamic art in national collections—and even when such objects were displayed, they tended to be seen as part of national histories. In his 1993 review essay on the field, Oleg Grabar noted, "Only in Cairo was there a building for what was then called 'Arab art' but even today, it is hardly ever on the map of mass tourist visits." Until very recently, much of the intelligentsia

in the Muslim world was simply not very interested in the category of Islamic art.[90]

2. Many Islamic art objects were meant to serve as useful implements: "Unlike much art in other traditions, whose primary character is its inutility, much Islamic art involves transformation of everyday utilitarian objects into works of art, often through decoration."[91] Similar objects could also be bought as crafts and souvenirs in bazaars: "Islamic art was transformed into the art of the 'natives'"[92] and became subject to what Grabar has characterized as the "Orientalist effect," which he identifies as "a perception which keeps comparing it to Western European art and to set up the paradigms for its evaluation by defining it in terms of Vitruvius, Alberti, Vasari, Focillon or Wolfflin or else envisaging it exclusively in archaeological terms. . . . Orientalism fostered single explanations for an art without the full credentials of Western art. Calligraphy, the arabesque, geometry, nomadic memories of textiles, unity in form and purpose, these are only some of the slogans around which an immense variety of experiences found simple explanations and . . . has had the tragic result of limiting the intellectual range with which the study and understanding of Islamic art was undertaken."[93]
3. Islamic art is seen by scholars of its classical period to have definitively ended by the nineteenth century.[94] "Islam continues to be a major force in world events, but Islamic art is generally said to have ended at the beginning of the nineteenth century with the advent of European colonialism and the emergence of distinct national identities."[95] Not coincidentally, this is precisely the period that sees the rise of the orientalist study of Islamic art, when Western society was undergoing the process of industrial modernization. The field is thus constructed as part of a long-standing Western scholarly assumption that structures other geographic and cultural domains in art history, in which all artistic traditions—other than the Western—have definitively come to crisis in modernity.[96] But one wonders how Islam can continue to exert a "major force" in the modern world without enacting itself in material and representational contexts.
4. As a result of this Western construction of the field of Islamic art and the absence of an aesthetic theory anchoring the field, the categories that describe Islamic art are essentially without discursive ground, unlike classical literature and poetry, for which a rich set of concepts are available under the umbrella of *adab* (humanism) and exegetical ana-

lyses of poetic and literary tropes.[97] Accounts of individual artists and architects are exceedingly rare. Indeed, in a review essay on the field published in 2003, Sheila Blair and Jonathan Bloom report that "there has never been a major exhibition devoted to any individual artist from the [classical] Muslim world."[98] The difference in status between Islamic art and Western art could not be more glaring—one cannot imagine a major period of Western art that failed to generate a single exhibition catalog on its individual artists. This absence of subjectivity in classical Islamic art is also very evident in the difference between the manner in which Islamic art and literatures have been studied; again, one cannot imagine even cursorily looking through classical Arabic, Persian, and Urdu literatures without encountering dozens of individual authors, each exhibiting their characteristic literary and poetic style. Partial exceptions to this anonymity are in the fields of architecture, painting, and calligraphy. But even in the case of architecture, the only category of "Islamic art" that can be considered on par with the Western hierarchy of fine art, lack of subjectivity remains the norm. Robert Hillenbrand, who has noted in his 2003 review essay that "Islamic architectural history is a field invented by Westerners and cast in Western terms," pointedly claims: "Even though hundreds and hundreds of Islamic architects left their signatures on their buildings, those buildings might just as well have been signed by Joe Bloggs; for the indispensable biographical information, the kind of thing that Vasari gives us so prodigally, is simply unavailable. These are effectively anonymous buildings."[99] In the case of Mughal painting, one sees the development of individual stylistic markers during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as well as a growing sense of a type of realism in depiction. Calligraphy possesses elaborate stylistic genealogical histories, as well as interpretive schemas derived from poetic and Sufi metaphors.[100] Calligraphy could have attained an individualized "artistic" status in the Western sense, but its importance has not been central to the category of Islamic art because it has largely been an orientalist project.[101] Nevertheless, in the early modern era in the Persianate and South Asian world, a process of individuation can be traced, both as personal subjective expression of the creator and in allowing greater possibilities of depicting an individual through representation. This process will be of signal importance to modernist artists, as argued in chapter 3.

5. Analysis of Islamic art has varied from universalist assumptions de-

rived from "perennial philosophy" approaches claiming how Islamic art embodies the unity of Islam and the oneness of God,[102] to accounts that describe artifacts specific to regions and dynasties, to their delineation by materials and media. Other scholars have attempted to map specific ornamental motifs as functioning as semiotic markers that signify shifts in patronage and power.[103] Structural taxonomies are also offered and cohere around a limited number of themes, such as "calligraphy, geometry, the arabesque and the treatment of figuration" in a 1976 exhibition. Similar organizing principles of "figures, writing, geometry, and vegetation and the arabesque," along with a "hybrid section" that incorporates more than one theme, have been proffered for a 2006 exhibition titled Cosmophilia.[104] The latter term is a coinage by the curators, denoting "the love of ornament,"[105] which, according to the catalog essay, serves as a sort of supercategory denoting the distinctiveness of Islamic art.[106] But, despite the importance that the curators accord to ornament, and for which they provide a further taxonomy of ten aspects (color, symmetry, and repetition among them), they nevertheless remain unable to provide an adequate aesthetic and philosophical ground: "Does all this visual delight have some deeper significance or is it all just superficial candy for the eye?"[107] This telling observation is not due to lack of study and reflection on the part of the curators, who are distinguished specialists in the field, but rather is characteristic of the constructed and "groundless" nature of the discipline itself.

To sum up, the study of Islamic art has historically been primarily a Western scholars' and connoisseurs' endeavor, one that remains unable to situate a discursive ground in the Islamicate tradition. The anthropologist Talal Asad has articulated the idea of "Islamic tradition" as a discursive practice open to contestation and debate, a conception that fosters a very different understanding of the relation between tradition and modernity than simple opposition between them. Summarizing some of the implications of Asad's approach, Ovamir Anjum notes: "The most fascinating questions about any contemporary Muslim society, those of reform, revival, modernity, and tradition, cannot even begin to be addressed until the mutual interaction of the Muslim world within the framework of a global Islamic discursive tradition is accounted for. And hence the idea of discursive tradition, which by definition is attuned to the idea of teaching and argument through time, becomes capable of transcending local dimensions and encompassing various Islamic

spaces."[108] The "problem" for modern Muslim artists, however, is precisely that such a tradition is lacking in the visual arts but is displaced toward literature or available primarily via orientalist projections. This lack is not necessarily disabling, however, as it permitted artists to explore the self in relation to modernity and tradition in a more open and experimental fashion.

Because the study of Islamic art unfolded in close association with orientalism, Islamic art was also compared unfavorably with the development of Western art, because it was not seen to privilege figuration and largely did not participate in codes of illusionism and representation based on Renaissance principles of perspective and modeling. Rather, Islamic art created decoration and ornament on utilitarian objects, which caused them to be seen as mostly applied art rather than fine art, under Western artistic schemas. Moreover, Islamic art has been viewed as having definitively ended by the beginning of the nineteenth century, resulting in approaches that are based in archaeology, taxonomy, or connoisseurship—all of which create the sense of allochronism of Islamic art and deny its coevality in relation to Western modernity.[109] Here, more scholarly attention to transformations of material and visual cultures in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is clearly needed. New architectural forms, the rise of print culture and mass culture, and the advent of new reproductive and representational technologies have meant that many so-called Islamic visual forms are more prevalent than ever. For example, calligraphy is arguably more dynamic today than in the past, and it is deployed in inventive ways in signage, print, and advertising. Yet these manifestations are seldom characterized as being part of Islamic art.

Moreover, at the beginning of the twentieth century, post-cubist art in the West finally broke itself away from the illusionist practices that had characterized Western art since the Renaissance. As Greenberg has argued, modernist painting no longer offered up a window to the world but rather became a reflexive practice that articulated its values in relation to the flatness of the picture plane. This brings transnational modernism much closer to the nonprojective surfaces of Islamic art, and indeed it is no accident that modernism cut its teeth on a complex and sustained engagement with Islamic and other non-Western aesthetics. The influence of Japanese woodblock prints on the postimpressionists, the influence of Theosophy, Anthroposophy, and Zen on abstract painters, the influence of African sculpture on the development of cubism, the influence of Islamic decoration on Matisse, and the influence of calligraphy on Paul Klee provide only a few such examples.[110]

Adolf Loos famously declared that modern man's love of ornament was a

sign of his criminality and degeneracy.[111] There are any number of thematic and formal ways by which modernism strove very hard to distinguish itself from simply being equated with decoration and ornament.[112] Abstraction attempted this by including within it the trace of the brush (as in abstract expressionism), and Matisse attempted it by facture, the retention of the figure, and the denial of exact symmetry, which mitigated against the reduction of the painted surface to "merely" being a decorated surface. Modernism was more invested than ever in fine art being resolutely separate from everyday life, of being conducive to disinterested observation and contemplation, and of possessing no use value. Finally, the subjectivity of the modernists acquires a central value. In this respect, much classical Islamic art, to the degree that it is anonymous and utilitarian, is clearly not modernist. But as Altieri observed in his critique of T. J. Clark, "Clark is clearly right to point to modernism's constantly being haunted by fears of thinness and shrillness and decorativeness and, above all, of not having sufficient social weight for its imaginings. Yet the modernists were at their thinnest and most shrill when they tried to supply discursive models for those grounds."[113] Following Altieri's observation, one can state that it is precisely the absence of a prior discursive ground for classical Islamic art and its arbitrarily orientalist construction that allows one to posit a critical genealogy of a *modern* Islamic art. Discursive and aesthetic ground is precisely what South Asian Muslim modernist *practice* ceaselessly seeks but never quite finds; it is what characterizes its modernism. Clearly its contingency also has certain advantages in terms of affording a relatively open and unconstrained relationship with its own tradition, and with transnational modernism.

Any attempt to delineate the nature of modern Islamic art would also have to account for Oleg Grabar's meditations on the task of describing the nature of Islamic art in his influential work, *The Formation of Islamic Art*. In the second edition of the book, published in 1987, Grabar suggests that the problem of articulating a cultural identity for modern and contemporary Muslim countries—which remain under the cultural influence exerted by the West—might be comparable to the delineation of an "Islamic" art during the seventh and eighth centuries. Specifically, Grabar argues that early Islamic art developed by rejecting overt symbolic and iconological aims, developing instead a flexible, mobile, and abstract system of ornamentation that drew upon older pre-Islamic forms but stripped them of their prior symbolic import.[114] The flexibility of this mode of ornamental practice meant that works derived from this "syntactic" mode endured over a long temporal span across diverse cul-

tural and historical formations, and it is precisely this mode of practice that delineates the "Islamic" character of what we generally understand today as premodern Islamic art.

Although Grabar's provocative reading of the contemporary challenge posed by modernity in conjunction with the formative period of the seventh and eighth centuries needs further reflection, one might argue that the challenge posited by modernity is, in fact, not comparable to the premodern. The direction and thrust of modern art marks a decisive break from premodern art—and certainly from much of premodern Islamic art—in that, for modern art, the artist-subject's existential or conceptual explorations are foregrounded. The second problem inheres in the very understanding of the "modern" as constant transformation and upheaval, which compels one to go beyond reductive typologies of form in attempting to characterize "modern Islamic art," such as calligraphy, historical and folk motifs, arabesque patterns, or geometric abstraction.[115] An understanding of the "modern" as a dynamic process, however, brings to crisis any fixity of form, technique, style, or signification. Nevertheless, Grabar's insistence on the primacy of syntax, structure, or idea over form in early Islamic art remains a useful reminder in articulating a relationship between Islamic art and modernism.

In light of my observations above, I argue that it is more productive to understand modern Islamic art from an *antifoundationalist* standpoint than to seek to secure its ontological status in an originary discursive ground based on primary texts or concepts. Rather than a descriptive marker denoting a fixed typology of objects and artists, the term is employed here as conceptual and intellectual provocation in relation to the analysis of modern and contemporary art. Modern Islamic art should be viewed as a shifting terrain of struggle and contestation between artistic projects that reconfigure "tradition" and critics who seek to understand their work. In this spirit, the following theses on modern Islamic art in South Asia relevant to the artists examined in this book are offered:

1. Modern Islamic art no longer remains purely decorative or ornamental. Artists deny pure decoration through various strategies. Figurative painters in dialogue with Mughal painting, such as Chughtai, develop stylistic markers that foreground their idiosyncratic styles, as argued in chapter 1. Zubeida Agha's paintings develop toward a jewel-like ornamental surface, but the ornament is fractured and nonrepetitive, as demonstrated in chapter 2. Calligraphers such as Sadequain do not

write traditional calligraphic scripts but imbue them with negativity and post-cubist figuration and abstraction, as examined in chapter 3.

2. The need for subjectivity in modernism is central, and the development of strategies that foreground subjective expression is marked in the works considered here and follows as a consequence of negating the artisanal anonymity assigned to classical Islamic art-as-craft. This is manifested in qualities such as incompleteness, distortion, tactility of the surface, and impermanence. Individual chapters discuss how artists deploy these values.
3. Artists recode and reterritorialize the traditional "slogans" that stereotypically characterize Islamic art, such as miniature painting, calligraphy, and ornament. Artists inherit these as lived practices in some cases (Chughtai, Sadequain) and seek to understand their relationship to the past through discursive articulations. These include relationships to literary and poetic aesthetics—such as those marking the works of poets such as Ghalib, Iqbal, and Hali—and through the stock categories by which orientalist scholarship has fashioned the field of Islamic art since the nineteenth century.
4. Artists also bring new values to their works, derived not only from transnational modernism and avant-gardist practices but also from recodings of the Islamic past. For example, Oleg Grabar has suggested that classical Islamic art "provided equal value to everything that was or could be represented," which I understand as the working over of an entire surface, without greater emphasis on a specific area or visual trope, and a refusal to privilege the figure over the ground.[116] He has also perceptively noted: "Works of Islamic art made it possible to imagine a beautiful setting for one's life without requiring the expensive materials. . . . These skills of make-believe in the industrial arts served to demonstrate that nothing is permanent except God, that it is immoral to invest in rich materials, and there should be as few distinctions as possible between what is available to the rich and what comes to the poor."[117] Grabar reads values of equality and justice, which many consider to be central values in Islam, as arguably present in classical Islamic art, but as a formal property rather than by depiction of a theme or subject matter.[118] Projects of social justice have increasingly become important to artists such as Rasheed Araeen, for which a precedent is arguably only obliquely present in classical Islamic art.[119] Artists create a new relationship with social critique, in

sympathy with literary developments since the 1930s by South Asian progressive writings—to which Muslim intellectuals made a foundational and indispensable contribution. Zainul Abedin's drawings documenting the Bengal Famine in 1943 expressed social concerns early on (chapter 3), but generally this book argues that the "progressive" haunted the modernist artists for several decades and resurfaces in the populist dimensions of the reception of Sadequain's works, the critical practices of Rasheed Araeen, and the contemporary feminist art of Naiza Khan.

5. Artists enrich the "tradition" of Islamic art by bringing in new themes absent or avoided in premodern Islamic art—as evidenced by the racialized symbolic and physical violence in the works of Rasheed Araeen and the feminist concerns regarding the carnality and fleshiness of the body, as in the works of Naiza Khan (chapter 4). This awareness of the female body draws from Western contemporary feminist art but also from reformist Islamic movements in South Asia since the nineteenth century that have sought to refashion the female body and women's moral and intellectual character. In this sense, the female body finally emerges in "Islamic" art as a problematic in itself rather than remaining a decorative motif.

This book offers an understanding of the works of the artists examined here as selectively drawing from Islamicate discursive literary and lived traditions and from the understanding of Islamic art offered by Western orientalist scholarship and also in affirmative affiliation with transnational modernism. As we have seen, the resources offered by the tradition of Islamic art were primarily formalist, resources that were recoded by these artists to fashion them to be relevant for modernity. As such, the readings offered here discuss how the national and the social press against artistic form and how critics understood these experiments. Since the 1920s, the artists included in this book have reworked fundamental categories characterizing the study of classical Islamic arts—architecture, miniature painting, ornament, and calligraphy—via the formal and procedural openings afforded by transnational modernism.

Roxanne Euben has reminded us that all genealogies are selective; accordingly, this book offers no attempt to provide a comprehensive or axiomatic definition of modernism in relation to Islamic art,[120] nor does it offer "complete" readings of the artists, whose complex projects are not exhausted by the frameworks deployed here. It traces only one genealogy—the emergence

of the artistic self in relation to tradition and society. Moreover, the relation between subjectivity and society is neither teleological nor continuous in a historicist sense. But instead it is a difficult and interruptive praxis that seeks to metaphorically articulate imaginings of the past and the future against the realist simplifications of the "progressive" left and the reductive rightist ideologies of nationhood and political Islam. Nevertheless, artists have remained engaged with the quandaries of inhabiting modernity as Muslims—not primarily in matters of core belief or ritual, but as a historically shifting and contested marker of modern sociocultural identity. Significantly, all the artists examined in this study also problematize aspects of gender and sexuality, which, although not fully explored here, is clearly worthy of further investigation. Even artists of the earlier decades, who were hardly informed by feminist perspectives and gender theory, connoted crises of masculinity or gender ambiguity by their examination of tradition and of the self. This was set against an official Pakistani nationalism that was aggressively masculinist. In this sense, Muslim South Asian modernism offers lines of departure in reimagining sex and gender roles of the modern psychic and social self.

The subjectivities traced here are also not reducible to other political and ethical formations, which require other accounts, keeping in mind that genealogies are fragmentary, partial, and without locatable origin. Wendy Brown has perceptively observed: "Various marked subjects are created through very different kinds of powers—not just different powers. That is, subjects of gender, class, nationalist, race, sexuality, and so forth, are created through different histories, different mechanisms and sites of power, different discursive formations, different regulatory schemes."[121] Indeed, an antifoundationalist approach to modern Islamic art suggests that other regions of the Muslim world have traversed trajectories not identical to those analyzed in this study, and for which modern Islamic art may not necessarily provide an effective analytical framework. But this book does stake a claim for deploying the terms "modernism" and "cosmopolitanism" and also "modern Islamic art" as marking the works of the artists examined here, in order to delineate their complex engagement with tradition and modernity. It advances the case for rethinking South Asian Muslim modernism as characterized by continuity/rupture and commensurability/alterity.

Chapter 1 analyzes the works and writings of the artist Abdur Rahman Chughtai (1894–1975) in the context of Mughal, Persian, Central Asian, and generally "oriental" nostalgia. Chughtai's deep commitment to a reworking of Mughal aesthetics includes his important writings on Mughal painting that

challenge the influential nativist Indian and Hindu nationalism articulated by Ananda Coomaraswamy. Chughtai's paintings deploy, but also deviate from, the formal language of the Bengal School of Painting based in Calcutta. His assertions of difference between the Bengal School and what he characterizes as the Lahore School are an imaginative effort to ground his work as an authentic modern re-creation of Mughal painting. Chughtai's work is situated with reference to his own writings and those by other critics and scholars, which began a process of Urdu writings on art history and visual aesthetics. Chughtai's nostalgia is projected on earlier Islamicate and Persianate cosmopolitanism, and it de-emphasizes identification with modern nationalism. Although mostly unsigned and undated, they nevertheless remain marked by his signature style, suggesting that the artist is present as a modern subject in his work but also partakes of history beyond individuation, thus incorporating aporias of subjectivity into his reworking of Mughal paintings. Chughtai was innovative in seeking new audiences for his work at a time when exhibition venues were limited. Accordingly, he is best known not for his individual paintings but through the publication of illustrated works of the poetry of Ghalib (1928) and Iqbal (1968) and also by his illustrations on the covers of various literary journals. While not *modernist* himself, Chughtai's contribution to *modernity* includes his stress on artistic individualism, which enacts a transition toward modernism proper by the next generation of artists. His reworking of miniature painting also forms an important precedent for the revival of contemporary miniature painting in Lahore since the 1990s.

Chapter 2 examines three pioneering modernists in Pakistan—Zainul Abedin, Shakir Ali, and Zubeida Agha. All are key institution builders and, unlike Chughtai, have little use for the precedent of miniature painting. Zainul Abedin (1914–76) was based in Calcutta until 1947. His work first attracted public attention in 1943 when he produced a powerful series of drawings of the Bengal Famine. Following national independence, he became founder-principal of the Institute of Fine Arts in Dacca in 1947, which was considered the finest art school in Pakistan's early years, although the "Bengali difference" in his work and the work of other East Pakistani artists, as an aesthetic separate from the development of art in the Western wing, was already noted by observers, and this chapter analyzes writings by critics to demonstrate how Abedin negotiated this difference. His later works, with their ornamental and decorative rhythms that lyrically depict the ethnic primitivism of the Santhal Hill tribes, forge an aesthetic link between the subnational and the cross-national, bypassing the national altogether (Plate 5). By contrast, Zubeida Agha (1922–97), whose works first engage with transnational modernism in

Pakistan, painted largely in seclusion. Her concerns included an intellectual engagement with Greek philosophy, classical Western music, the study of mysticism, and a fascination with the urban. Her later paintings vacillate between depiction and abstraction but are characterized above all by dazzling colorist and decorative motifs (Plates 7, 8). Following Oleg Grabar's conception of ornament as mediation, this chapter argues that Agha's nonrepetitive and fractured ornamental aesthetic, characterized by asymmetry, provides a broken screen upon which modernist individuality is projected and thus marks consequential estrangement of the individual from easy identification with the nation-state. Shakir Ali (1916–75), who arrived in Lahore after training in Europe, introduced cubism to Pakistan in the 1950s. Despite his "progressive" leftist formation, he refused the language of realism and focused on formalism. As principal of the influential National College of Art in Lahore during the 1960s, his example and his teaching helped establish modernism in Lahore and Karachi. His modernist works and writings on aesthetics, suffused with German romanticism and Sufi spiritualism, nevertheless stress the cosmopolitanism of artistic modernism and its freedom from confining nationalist and religious frameworks. He also executed an important series of calligraphic paintings, fashioning an overt link with Islamic art. The three artists are foundational in introducing modernism into Pakistan and for shaping a fully modernist artistic subjectivity for themselves and, by their institutional labor, for subsequent artists.

The celebrated Pakistani artist Sadequain (1930–87), who introduced calligraphic motifs in his modernist paintings and drawings, is considered in chapter 3. His residence in Paris during the 1960s is of fundamental importance for the development of his calligraphic concerns. By the early 1960s, Sadequain's works foregrounded the artist-and-model genre, which investigates the reflexive question incessantly asked by the modern artist: What to paint and how? This question is immeasurably more difficult for an artist from the periphery to answer—in Sadequain's case, if he had depended only upon the conception of modern art as a European formation. But Sadequain was led back to calligraphy and Urdu poetry. By the late 1960s, Sadequain's work was relaying classical, poetic, and textual notions of subjectivity, available to Urdu poetry, into the visual, especially in poet Muhammad Iqbal's Sufi, Nietzschean, and Bergsonian ideas of dynamism and heroic subjectivity (Plate 12). In this process, Sadequain reformulated classical calligraphy as a viable visual "tradition" open to the modern artist, a maneuver that parallels the rise of calligraphic abstraction by other artists in West Asia and North Africa. Sadequain is also distinctive for continually seeking a broader audi-

ence for his works. His zeal in executing large public murals, his roadside displays of art, and his successful popularization of calligraphic paintings created new relays between the artist and an expanded public. This chapter also examines these new relationships that emerged during the course of Sadequain's career.

Chapter 4 situates the work of two artists who have moved to a contemporary modality of artistic practice, which insistently maps aporias and dislocations of the present era. Rasheed Araeen was born in Karachi in 1935 and studied civil engineering, but he was deeply interested in art and moved to England in 1964 to pursue his career. His early Karachi works show some correspondences with those of his contemporaries but include a sense of rhythm and process that he continued to develop later. His works from the mid- and later 1960s are aligned with avant-garde movements such as fluxus, minimalism, installation, and performance but emphasize values of process and equality made visible by decolonization. By the early 1970s, Araeen was thoroughly politicized by the institutional racism of the art establishment in Britain, and he was involved with the wider issues of race, class, and the perpetuation of Western imperialist legacies. He joined the Black Panther movement, and in 1989 he founded the journal *Third Text*, which remains a leading journal devoted to postcolonial critiques of art and culture. This chapter demonstrates how his later works and activities mark a return to direct social engagement. Many of his works, such as his *Paki Bastard* performance (1977), provocatively challenge white supremacy and Eurocentrism by foregrounding racism and the ensuing production of incommensurability between immigrants to the United Kingdom and larger British society. His self-portraits composed of Urdu letters, *Ethnic Drawings* (1982) (Figure 4.7), and *The Golden Verses* (1990) billboard (Plate 15), composed of Urdu text, are prescient in forging a critical public self in an era of the increased visibility of Muslims in media since the late 1970s. Educated in the United Kingdom, the Karachi-based artist Naiza Khan (born 1968) has developed her artistic practice through a persistent meditation on the female body, producing an extended series of works exploring its sensuality, but also its weight, its opacity, and its recalcitrance in relation to the social order. Naiza Khan's works are articulated primarily by the practice of studio drawing and printmaking and are supplemented by a self-imposed, limited use of nontraditional media, such as latex, organza, and henna paste. She earlier made a series of works with reference to the poet Hali's famous epic, *The Flow and Ebb of Islam* (1879). In her project *Henna Hands* (1997–2003), Khan draws screen-printed ornamental nude female figures using henna paste on Karachi streets in an effort to

address an expanded public sphere in which the studio-based language of high art enters into a spirited dialogue with gendered everyday life (Plate 17). Her recent work is even more provocative—for example, in her exhibition of hard and unyielding metal bodily implements such as chastity belts, metal corsets, and lingerie made with steel in the project titled *Heavenly Ornaments* (2005–8). These works were created while the artist was pursuing the study of one of the most important texts of reformist Islam in South Asia—*Heavenly Ornaments*, by Ashraf Ali Thanawi, written a century earlier but still widely considered to contain indispensable moral advice for young women. The association of such charged objects with the Islamic discursive tradition suggests that the tension between the demands of the social order and the intractability of the body has sharpened considerably in the artist's recent work. In this sense, the female body finally becomes visible in Muslim South Asian art as a problematic in itself, rather than simply remaining a decorative motif. Moreover, Khan's engagement marks an attempt by emergent contemporary practice to address the growing strength of scripturalist Islam in Pakistan and indeed in the global arena.

CHAPTER 1 ABDUR RAHMAN CHUGHTAI

MUGHAL AESTHETIC IN THE AGE OF PRINT

Abdur Rahman Chughtai (1897–1975) is generally considered the first significant modern Muslim artist from South Asia. But this statement itself is not as simple as it appears at first glance. Specifically, none of its claims—of his precedence, his modernity, and his status as an *artist*—were settled matters when he began his career. Rather, during Chughtai's long career, which spanned over fifty years of highly concentrated and intense activity, his supporters and critics repeatedly resurrected these questions for debate. Beginning in the 1920s, perspectives on the modernity of Chughtai, and on his status as an artist, have been offered in Urdu and in English; yet art historical debate in Urdu and English on Chughtai has largely attached itself to literary criticism and the orientalist understanding of Islamic art, not least by Chughtai himself. This chapter focuses on the critical reception of Chughtai by Urdu literary critics and authors from the 1920s and through essays on the artist in English. This complex interaction between Urdu literary concerns and the emerging understanding of Persian miniature, Mughal painting, and other painting traditions in India shaped the horizon of Chughtai's career. Apart from his voluminous painterly output, Chughtai served as a partisan and provocateur in locating himself in the rediscovery of a complex inherited painterly tradition. The artist articulated his views in a series of important essays on aesthetics in Urdu, texts that have as yet not been critically examined at length. His work must also be situated in relation to his brother Abdullah Chughtai's scholarly researches into Mughal and Persian painting, calligraphy, architecture, and ornament, as forming a broader revival of Mughal aesthetics during the early and mid-twentieth century.

This chapter demonstrates how Mughal nostalgia serves to decenter Chughtai's identification with a specific national site, projecting it instead onto earlier Islamicate and Persianate cosmopolitanism.[1] Chughtai remained ambivalent about the ceaseless transformation enacted by modernity yet incorporated his subjectivity into his reworking of the miniature. Accordingly, his later works are undated, unsigned, and evocative of the lost Mughal past. Chughtai's self-orientalism was a response to late colonialism: his modernity

lies in his insistent foregrounding of his "Muslim" subjectivity by development of a distinct style, and his friendships within the literary and intellectual circles in Lahore sought to create a discursive framework in which his paintings and his self might be fashioned. Moreover, his participation in exhibitions organized by art societies and the dissemination of his style via print culture created new audiences. This chapter briefly sketches the nineteenth-century background of painting in the Punjab and aesthetic debates in Bengal, examining the influences of the Bengal School of Painting on Chughtai. It then discusses Chughtai's career and the reception of Chughtai's later works in the context of the emergent literary culture in Lahore.

PAINTING IN THE PUNJAB

Painting in the Punjab since the mid-nineteenth century consisted of a variety of intersecting residual, dominant, and emergent forms and practices.[2] Punjab had been under Mughal rule earlier and was subsequently under Sikh rule before the British began exerting direct control over much of it in the middle of the nineteenth century. Various artisanal practitioners of miniature Mughal and Sikh painting continued their work through the nineteenth century, but under increasingly difficult circumstances. Two important types of practitioners were known as *naqqash* and *musavvir*. The former worked on illumination and ornamentation of legal and ritual documents and borders of Arabic and Persian manuscripts and would at times also work as skilled calligraphers. The scholar Abdullah Chughtai, younger brother of Abdur Rahman, notes that the color schemes of the *naqqash* differed from those of the *musavvir*, who created miniature paintings of "animated objects."[3] During this period, non-Muslims patronized representational arts more frequently than Muslims. These commissions included wall murals that depicted religious, mythological, and everyday themes of leisure. Architectural decoration also included nonrepresentational arabesque schemes on building facades. The term *mimar*, used by Abdullah Chughtai in regard to many of his ancestors, refers to a builder/architect, while the word *muhandis* implied a builder endowed with engineering skills.[4] In the wake of the lithographic print revolution sweeping India during the nineteenth century, book illustrations based on miniature and popular painting began to accompany vernacular publications. These included themes from Hindu mythology as well as poetry and folktales from the Punjab. To dramatize their stories, bazaar performers (including women) would display albums of narratives of myths and scenes of punishments from hell. At the turn of the century, painters sold their popular

works on the sidewalks and at festivals to the public at very affordable rates.[5] Another important type of miniature painting was patronized by local rulers of states in the Punjab Hills. Due to a comparative lack of patronage by Muslims for representational art, many Muslim painters routinely painted Hindu mythological themes, sometimes rendered in a miniature style and format, while others created illusionist mythological works based on European academic styles.[6]

The case of Ustad Allah Bukhsh (1895–1978), who was of the same generation as Chughtai, exemplifies some of the dilemmas of securing patronage and of the formalist possibilities available to a painter who was not yet influenced by the Bengal School revolution (which is discussed shortly).[7] Allah Bukhsh began his career as a sign painter in Lahore, painting letters and numbers on railway carriages. He moved to Calcutta in 1914, painting stage sets for dramatist Agha Hashar Kashmiri, and then went back and forth between Bombay and Lahore from 1915 to 1919, working as a portrait painter. From 1919 to 1922, he was an illustrator for a vernacular newspaper in Lahore. During his second stint in Bombay, from 1922 on, he began a commercially lucrative career painting multiple copies of Lord Krishna and other Hindu iconography, to the extent that he became recognized in India as the "Krishna artist."[8] His output included landscapes and portraits executed in oil, using British academic styles and informed by prevalent academic paintings and prints of Hindu mythology, Punjabi folktales, and romantic landscapes with detailed renderings of rocks and other natural forms.[9] Allah Bukhsh's lack of formal education and social capital, his reliance throughout his life on academic oil painting, and his lack of a sufficiently individual signature style meant that his artistic persona remained confined within an older, artisanal mode of visual practice rather than emerging as a full-blown modern artistic subject ushered in by the Bengal School. The artist Zubeida Agha recounted an anecdote regarding a visit to Dacca in 1954 with him: "Allah Bukhsh expressed surprise at being honoured as an artist. He told her that he was 'of the rank of *tarkhan* [carpenter] and *loharan* [blacksmith] and did not know how he became an artist.'"[10] Allah Bukhsh's paintings are usually unsigned and undated, and although Chughtai also followed this practice, the difference in their artistic subjectivity is crucial in terms of their social location in modernity.[11] Another figure contemporary to Chughtai was Haji Sharif (1899–1978), who rendered versions of Mughal and Pahari miniature paintings, taught traditional miniature painting at the Mayo School of Art in Lahore from 1945 to 1966, and also worked in an artisanal, craft-based mode.[12] Again, Chughtai's practice departs from Sharif's in charting a new path by situating himself as

a modern artist. Chughtai firmly established individual artistic subjectivity and imagination as a central motif in his work. He also recognized that modern patronage and audience arrangements had decisively shifted since the Mughal era and thus depended upon the circulation of print culture to disseminate his work.

As an artist, Chughtai rises above the artisanal and commercial arena in which Haji Sharif and Allah Bukhsh remained for much of their lives. Chughtai's formation was shaped by the mediation of ideas of subjectivity and imagination that emerged in the wake of the Bengal School rather than by the commercial possibilities available to illusionist painters such as Allah Bukhsh or to the small number of miniature "copyists" such as Haji Sharif. Despite his reliance on the Mughal tradition, Chughtai's modernity lies in his insistent foregrounding of his own subjectivity; the development of a style associated with, yet distinct from, the Bengal School; and his friendship with the literary and intellectual circles in Lahore that sought to create a discursive framework in which his paintings might be understood. But Chughtai's modernity is also paradoxical as the static formal and thematic universe evoked by his art offered a counterpoint to his social location in a turbulent, decolonizing historical process.

Emerging since the mid-nineteenth century were art schools founded in India under British patronage, which provided technical training based on Arts and Crafts principles.[13] The Mayo School of Art, based in Lahore, was founded in 1874 under the principalship of John Lockwood Kipling (father of novelist Rudyard Kipling), and the training at Mayo heavily emphasized the renewal of traditional craft skills rather than fine art.[14]

BENGAL SCHOOL OF PAINTING

During the late nineteenth century, many Indian artists in Bombay, Madras, and Calcutta who were trained in British academic styles increasingly selected Indian historical and mythological subject matter and showed their oil paintings and sculptures in exhibitions and salons organized by art societies.[15] Ravi Varma (1848–1906), a successful salon artist who also undertook commissions for native princes, issued a series of Hindu mythological works painted according to academic history painting styles in the 1890s as colored lithographic prints, which proved to be immensely popular.[16] Their affordability not only enabled their wide circulation but also altered public expectations as to what a truly Indian art might look like. The later nineteenth century had also witnessed increasing textual scholarship on India's premod-

ern visual past, which was increasingly shown to be Hindu and Buddhist, by British scholars and Indian nationalists.[17] Art historian Guha-Thakurta notes the impact of these aesthetic developments in Bengal in creating a discourse of aesthetic nationalism:

> Ravi Varma's project bolstered the central premises of both European Orientalism and Indian nationalists. . . . Within this "classical" canon, the choice of themes—particularly the romantic themes of love, longing and bereavement—was seen to uphold the most lofty and lyrical values embedded in Indian literature and mythology. . . . Ravi Varma's mythic personages . . . came consciously to represent a Pan-Indian type—individualised, often regionally placeable, yet standing forth as certain ideal national prototypes. . . . It is around their reception in Bengal that ideas were first raised and projected about how "genuine Indianness" relied not merely on content but also on form, spirit and emotion of a painting. . . . A special intellectual and aesthetic climate, concerned with a new definition of "Indian-ness," hoisted itself above the existing sphere of practice and profession, patronage and market in the arts.[18]

With the emergence of the Bengal School of Painting in 1900, Ravi Varma's academic style was overthrown and "higher" assumptions regarding the spiritualism, idealism, and nationalism of Indian art intensified. The Bengal School has been discussed in two detailed studies, and pertinent observations are briefly summarized here.

Abanindranath Tagore, a member of the illustrious Tagore family, was the founder of the Bengal School, which assimilated numerous technical and conceptual influences, including Mughal painting, Japanese wash techniques, pan-Asian ideals, and emergent Indian nationalist art historical writings from the first decade of the twentieth century. E. B. Havell, a British official sympathetic to Indian art and crafts who became superintendent of the Calcutta School of Art in 1896, played a key role in mediating the formation of the Bengal School. Havell, influenced by Arts and Crafts ideals, began to emphasize the study of the Indian visual past at the Calcutta School of Art but encountered resistance from Indian students who were seeking to master British academic styles.[19] Havell's meeting with Abanindranath in 1896 and his tutelage of the latter resulted in Abanindranath making a close study of Mughal paintings from Havell's collection. Abanindranath's new works, which spurned British academic illusionism in favor of compositions inspired by his study of the miniature, were exhibited at the Calcutta School of Art in 1900 and won the gold medal at the Congress Industrial Ex-

hibition in 1901–2. At the Delhi Durbar Exhibition of Indian Arts and Crafts, organized by Lord Curzon at the height of British power in India in 1903, Abanindranath exhibited Mughal-themed paintings, including *The Building of the Taj* and *The Passing of Shah Jahan* (ca. 1903) (Figure 1.1). The latter work, intended to introduce the allegedly missing "*bhava* [emotion] into Mughal pictorial conventions,"[20] was awarded the silver medal, increasing Abanindranath's national stature.[21] The arrival of influential Japanese art historian and philosopher of pan-Asianism Kakuzo Okakura in the Tagore household in 1902 brought direct influence of Japanese art for Abanindranath.[22] In 1903, upon his return to Japan, Okakura dispatched two young Japanese artists to Calcutta, where they continued their relationship with the Tagore family intellectuals, leading Abanindranath and other Bengal School painters to develop their "wash" techniques and other aesthetic technical and procedures. And, according to art historian Ratan Parimoo, at that time works by Aubrey Beardsley and other Art Nouveau artists were also available through magazine reproductions.[23]

The colonial partition of the province of Bengal in 1905 was welcomed by many disadvantaged Muslims in East Bengal as a way to secure opportunities, but it inflamed Indian nationalist sentiments, especially in the more educated and modern West Bengal. These coalesced in the nationalist Swadeshi movement[24]—the newfound significance assigned to national culture had a transformative effect on the Bengal School (for example, Abanindranath Tagore's *Bharat Mata*, from 1905) (Figure 1.2).[25] In 1905, Abanindranath began teaching at the Calcutta School of Art, influencing students toward his new aesthetic. During the first decade of the twentieth century, three prominent outsiders, Havell, Sister Nivedita, and Ananda Coomaraswamy, decisively contributed to debates on Indian aesthetics. There are differences among their stances, but all three idealized the Hindu and Buddhist past and sought to shape and interpret Bengal School paintings in a nonnaturalist, spiritualized register.[26] The Bengal School increasingly propagated its philosophy and techniques on a national scale by organizing artistic groups and societies and convening public lectures and exhibitions.[27] The Indian Society of Oriental Art, formed in 1907, became an important vehicle for the promotion of the Bengal School style.[28] The rise of the Bengal School was thus associated with the emergence of a lively intellectual environment and debate on art and aesthetics during the first third of the twentieth century in Calcutta. Much of this research and debate was carried out in illustrated journals in Bengali and in English and devoted to art, such as *Prabasi*, *Modern Review*, and *Rupam*. The first two were published by Ramananda Chatterjee,

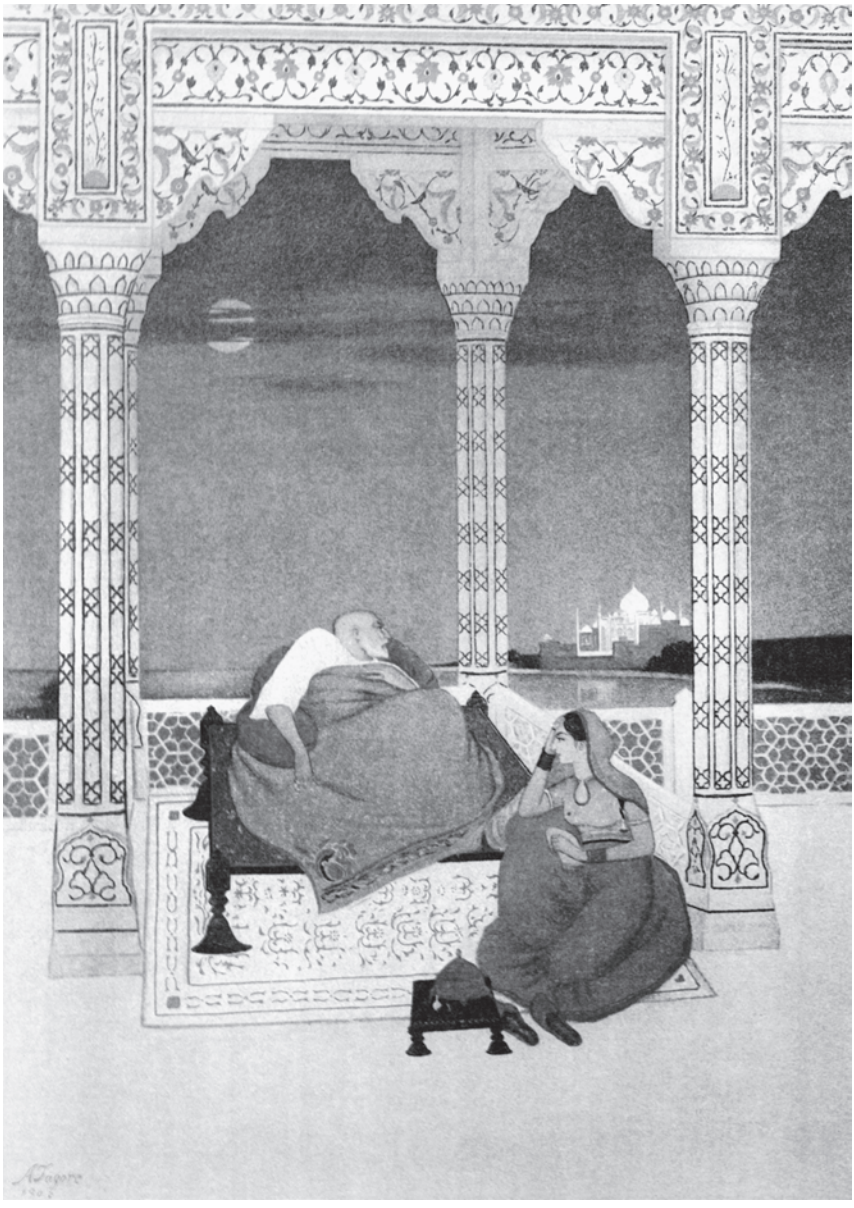


FIGURE 1.1. *Abanindranath Tagore,* The Passing of Shah Jahan, *ca. 1903. Oil. Dimensions n.a. (Collection of Rabindra Bharati, Calcutta.)*

FIGURE 1.2.
Abanindranath Tagore, Bharat Mata, *1905. Watercolor on paper. Dimensions n.a. (Collection of Rabindra Bharati, Calcutta.)*

who also issued *Chatterjee's Picture Albums*, a series of bound plates in full color (Figure 1.3).[29] By 1915, the self-consciously orientalized Bengal School style had become dominant in Bengal. Noting that even a large mercantile and industrial city like Bombay, which was one of the centers of British authority as well as the home of a major art school, had not developed a similar discourse on aesthetics, art historian Partha Mitter describes the remarkable transformation of the Bengal School as now representing Indian art on the national platform:

> Although art societies were active in Bombay, there were no debates on art in the city; it was a profession conducted with impersonal efficiency. But in Calcutta, art came to hold the centre stage in cultural politics. Annotated art plates in magazines, to paraphrase Clausewitz, helped conduct the "war" by other means. They were the propaganda weapons in the Orientalist invasion, as acknowledged by Abanindranath: "Our pictures are

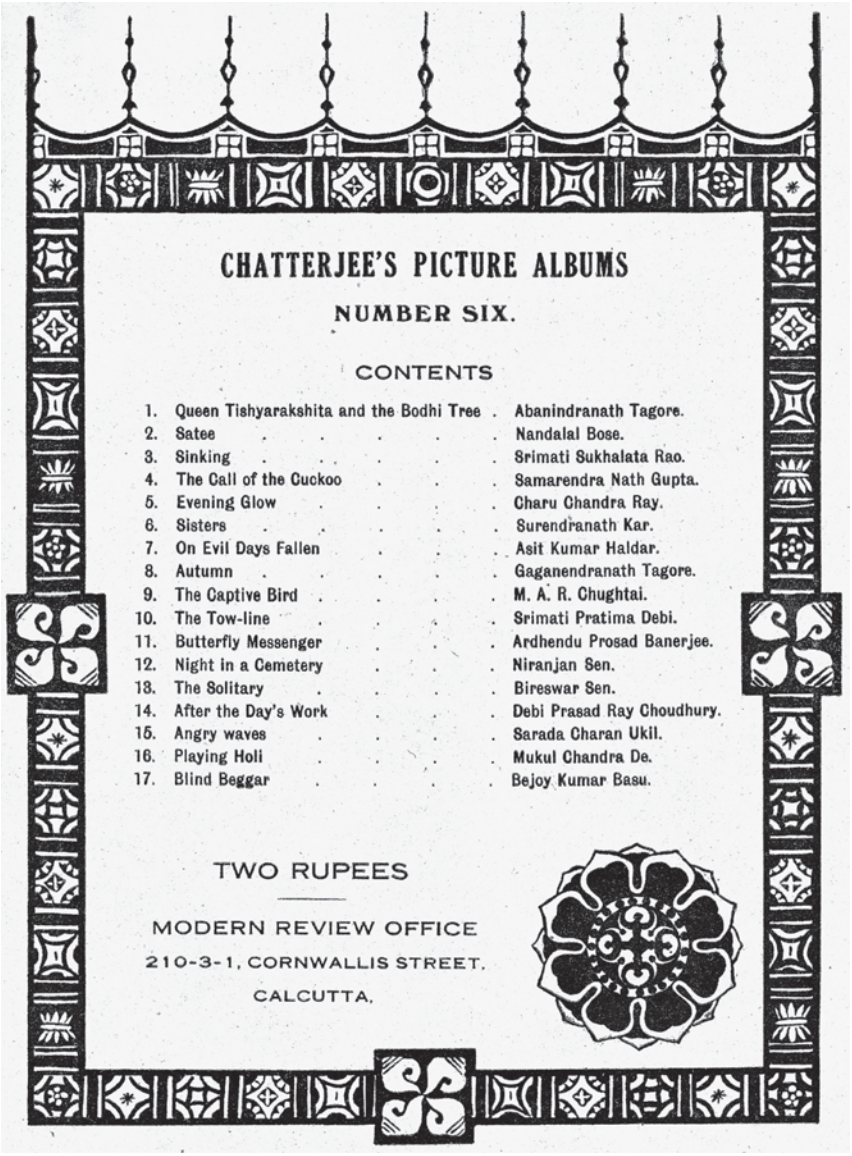

CHATTERJEE'S PICTURE ALBUMS
NUMBER SIX.
CONTENTS
1. Queen Tishyarakshita and the Bodhi Tree . Abanindranath Tagore.
2. Satee . . . . . Nandalal Bose.
3. Sinking . . . . . Srimati Sukhalata Rao.
4. The Call of the Cuckoo . . . Samarendra Nath Gupta.
5. Evening Glow . . . . Charu Chandra Ray.
6. Sisters . . . . . Surendranath Kar.
7. On Evil Days Fallen . . . Asit Kumar Haldar.
8. Autumn . . . . . Gaganendranath Tagore.
9. The Captive Bird . . . . M. A. R. Chughtai.
10. The Tow-line . . . . Srimati Pratima Debi.
11. Butterfly Messenger . . . Ardhendu Prosad Banerjee.
12. Night in a Cemetery . . . Niranjan Sen.
13. The Solitary . . . . Bireswar Sen.
14. After the Day's Work . . . Debi Prasad Ray Choudhury.
15. Angry waves . . . . Sarada Charan Ukil.
16. Playing Holi . . . . Mukul Chandra De.
17. Blind Beggar . . . . Bejoy Kumar Basu.
TWO RUPEES
MODERN REVIEW OFFICE
210-3-1, CORNWALLIS STREET.
CALCUTTA.

FIGURE 1.3. *Cover of* Chatterjee's Picture Albums, *a series of bound plates in full color. 29 × 21 cm.*

in every household because of Ramananda Babu [Chatterjee]. . . . By his perseverance and by financial investments in superior color and half-tone prints, he has created a demand where none existed before." From 1912, "Chatterjee's Picture Albums" familiarised the Bengal School throughout India.[30]

By the 1920s, the Bengal School had assumed virtual hegemony over the notion of "Indian" art and was actively disseminating its aesthetic beliefs and practices across India.[31] Students from other regions of India streamed to Bengal to train with the Bengal School painters, and many of Abanindranath's "inner core" colleagues and students accepted appointments to head various art schools across India. In the case of the Mayo School of Art in Lahore, this process began even earlier, in 1914, when Samarendranath Gupta was appointed assistant principal. The richness of aesthetic debates in Bengal and the success of Abanindranath and others in creating a hegemonic nationalist school of painting must be contrasted with the lack of comparable debates on art in Lahore. Lahore was instead undergoing a revival of Urdu literature and criticism, also enabled by the rise of journals and print culture. Later, this chapter shows how Chughtai's artistic concerns mediate between the influence of visual practices and associated debates originating from Bengal and the literary environment of Lahore.

Two other points about the Bengal School are important to mention here: the status of the artist and the role of Mughal art. The Bengal School inaugurated a new paradigm of artistic subjectivity, marking an important break from the roles the makers of art and crafts had occupied earlier. The higher role of the artist was now fully separated from that of the artisan. The artist was now viewed as autonomous from base patronage and invested with transcendent ideals.[32] Mughal architecture and painting had assumed a paradoxically central and marginal role in the emergence of the Bengal School and its promoters. Along with his discovery of Hindu and Buddhist art, Abanindranath's turn toward Indian art was founded on his study of Mughal miniature paintings. Havell and Abanindranath explored pre-Mughal Indian art together, but it was Havell, a collector of Mughal paintings, who sparked Abanindranath's appreciation of Mughal painting. Although Abanindranath painted a variety of themes, including Hindu and Buddhist myths, Mughal and "Islamic" subjects remained an abiding interest for him.[33] Apart from the works on the Taj Mahal that he had exhibited at the Delhi Durbar Exhibition in 1903, he continued to paint works such as *Aurangzeb Examining the Head of Dara* (ca. 1905), on the *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* (ca. 1905–9), *Zeibunnisa* (ca. 1921), and the acclaimed later series of works on the Arabian Nights (1928–30).[34] For Abanindranath, miniature paintings from the Mughal and from later schools such as Pahari "came to provide a main pattern for emulation in the making of the 'Indian style.'"[35] In general, Bengal School themes were primarily illustrations of literary and mythical narratives. Ravi Varma had pioneered the painting of such historical and mythological narratives in

academic illusionist history paintings executed in oil and released as chromolithographs, but beginning in 1907 his work was attacked by Nivedita, Havell, and Coomaraswamy, who accused Varma of debasing and de-idealizing the past.[36] The "sense of distinction" of the Bengal School, notes Guha-Thakurta, "*vis-à-vis* the Ravi Varma brand of Academic painting was linked as much to the devising of a new pictorial style as to the emergence of a new language of aesthetic discourse."[37] This new pictorial style was "associated with a reduction in the size and scale of composition, a miniaturisation of forms, and an emphasis on intricate, ornamental details."[38] The break from Ravi Varma represented the refusal by the Bengal School to deploy what the latter understood to be a borrowed language of European "materialism."

Coomaraswamy, in particular, in a prolific series of essays and books, forcefully emphasized that Indian art ought to find a way forward by reference to an ideal past. His critique of Ravi Varma's academic historicism was thus precisely that such a borrowed realist style failed to project the past as suffused with timeless ideals.[39] For example, in contrast with the full-bodied sculptural female figure in much of ancient Indian sculpture and in academic painting, the rarefied, delicate figure in Bengal School painting now depicted "certain ideal 'feminine' qualities: like gentleness and dignity, stoicism and self-sacrifice, reticence and spirituality."[40] The Bengal School painters and critics actively unearthed and interpreted ancient Indian aesthetic texts[41] and sought to draw aesthetic lessons from the ancient Buddhist murals at Ajanta, which had become something of a reservoir of Indian aesthetics, especially since artists, including Samarendranath Gupta, participated in an expedition to the site in 1909–10, selectively interpreting the Ajanta mural paintings according to spiritualist values.[42] Chughtai also visited Ajanta later, which he frequently mentions in his writings, and its murals may well have influenced his later work.[43]

The marginality of Mughal art in the emerging art historical discourse of the Bengal School was articulated with the anti-Muslim dimension of the Swadeshi movement.[44] Since the later nineteenth century, influential Hindu nationalists idolized Hindu and Buddhist India and increasingly viewed Muslims as predators and invaders. Although Havell and Coomaraswamy were appreciative of the magnificence of Mughal art and architecture, their strategy emphasized Indian (equated with Hindu) elements of Mughal art as superseding its Persian and Islamic dimensions. The Taj Mahal offers a prominent example of such sectarian interpretation. Havell had provocatively argued that the Taj Mahal "belongs to India, not to Islam."[45] As Osman Jamal has recently noted, Havell's statement, which compares unlike terms (a reli-

gion with a nation), nonetheless assumes that Islam and India are mutually antithetical. Coomaraswamy had confirmed Havell's judgment on the Taj, further claiming that, in general, "the Mughal building, however splendid, and although it made large use of existing technique, was an artificial growth, dependent on personal patronage, and not, like Hindu art, a direct product of local conditions."[46] According to this view, Mughal art was secular, courtly, and ostentatious rather than religious and truly national. Samarendranath Gupta, a Bengal School artist based in Lahore, offered a similar judgment based on "a notion of 'classicism' in art." For Gupta, unlike "classical" Ajanta, "Mughal paintings or the Taj Mahal, however beautiful, were seen to be lacking in that 'epic splendour,' 'sublimity' and 'higher feelings.'"[47] Gupta was vice principal of the Mayo School of Art when Chughtai was employed there, and Chughtai's antipathy toward him may well have been based on the broad anti-Muslim views that the ideologues associated with the Bengal School broadly shared.[48] Generally speaking, these early twentieth-century critics interpreted the past as serving as pedagogy and inspiration for the emergence of a new "national" art.[49]

In sum, the Bengal School and its allied critics fashioned an influential artistic practice and discourse that placed Buddhist and Hindu aesthetic precedents at the heart of national aesthetic practice. Even while the artists themselves were more open to other influences—in particular Abanindranath, who is best characterized as a cosmopolitan artist, assimilating Mughal and Japanese pictorial styles and returning to "Muslim" themes throughout his career—the overall thrust of Swadeshi visual aesthetics possessed a sectarian character. Although it could not be ignored due to its prominence, the Mughal contribution to Indian art and architecture was viewed as Muslim and was interpreted as being secular, courtly, and thus less sincere than religious and "national" art.

Coomaraswamy's scholarly "discovery" of Rajput paintings powerfully reiterated these values. Published in 1916, *Rajput Painting* was one of the most important works in Coomaraswamy's illustrious career. In it, he forcefully argued for the discovery of a hitherto undiscovered school of painting. The scope of the study covered the years 1500 to 1850. Coomaraswamy labeled this school as Rajput, "because all the works discussed here have been produced under the patronage of Rajput princes; it conveniently summarizes the fact of broad distinction from Mughal; and it is preferable to any sectarian name such as Hindu, because that would have too wide an application."[50] The term "Rajput" itself included three broad "schools," delineated by geographic areas, the Rajasthani, the Pahari, and the Sikh. The Pahari School was further

divided into subdivisions, and despite Coomaraswamy's effort to avoid using the "sectarian" Hindu label to describe its findings, his explanations nevertheless argue for a clear binary division between Muslim and Hindu art, marked by the terms "Mughal" and "Rajput," respectively. Coomaraswamy reiterates the characterizations of Mughal art as a spectacular but relatively shallow and transient art, compared to the timeless, more exalted values that Rajput art is held to possess:

> There could scarcely exist two contemporary schools more diverse in temper. . . . Mughal art is one of miniature painting, . . . secular, intent upon the present moment, and profoundly interested in individuality. It is splendid and attractive, but it rarely touches the deep springs of life. The subject matter of Mughal art, as such, is of purely aristocratic interest: while that of the Rajput painters is universal. . . . Rajput painting . . . belongs to the mainstream.[51]

> Portraiture is the typical mode of Mughal painting. Its predominance there and comparative subordination in Rajput art, exactly reflect the characteristic bias of the Mughal and Hindu culture—the one deeply interested in individual character and in passing events, the other in ideal types and symbols.[52]

> When India gave the world a great art, her people were essentially of one mind, and the same art flourished everywhere, little dependent on individual genius . . . and had its roots far back in racial experience.[53]

Coomaraswamy's rigid distinction between Mughal and Rajput painting and his unsupported attempts to link sixteenth-century painting to the artistic tradition last seen in Ajanta more than a thousand years earlier has been subject to widespread criticism,[54] and this is not the place to reiterate these assessments. Nevertheless, his basic framework, which views the individuated, temporal aspects of Mughal painting against a timeless Hindu archetype, has persisted in contemporary scholarship. For example, Milo Cleveland Beach's study, *Mughal and Rajput Painting*, published in 1992 as a volume in the influential New Cambridge History of India series, similarly acknowledges that "the Rajput artist showed no sustained interest in the visual specificity, or individual psychological comprehension, that was so distinctive a Mughal contribution to Indian art." Beach continues a tradition of seeing Indian art as devoid of social and historical contextualization, as evident from his concluding remarks:

> Rajput painters continually confirmed the richness and universality of inherited artistic styles. This profoundly Indian attitude was eventually accepted even by Mughal painters, who had begun already in Jahangir's reign to emphasize the universal aspects of the emperors, rather than their unique qualities, and to diminish the importance of the individualistic, innovative styles practiced by specific painters. What has been termed the decline of imperial Mughal art when viewed with the criteria of the European historian is also evidence of the assimilation finally of Mughal painting into the Indian artistic mainstream.[55]

Although Beach is more circumspect in his claims, he nevertheless shares many of the assumptions motivating Coomaraswamy at the beginning of the twentieth century, that there is an archetypal "mainstream" Indian art, characterized by a collective universality rather than by individualism, particularity, and stylistic succession. Ironically, the very values that might have conferred historicity and modernity on Indian art since the sixteenth century, such as secularization, the development of realism, the attention to the minutiae of everyday life, and the development and succession of individual style (rather than a fixed and immobile and atemporal religious art), were disparaged by Indian nationalist art historians of the early and mid-twentieth century as being insufficiently Indian, and, as shown above, such assessments persist in recent studies.[56]

Despite growing sectarianism, the early twentieth century was an exciting time for scholarship on Mughal painting. British museums and collectors from the later nineteenth century and earlier had eagerly acquired paintings and manuscripts, and scholarly works on Mughal painting initially appeared in the first decade of the twentieth century, but it was not until the 1920s that orientalist scholars and British administrators wrote major studies on Mughal painting.[57] Coomaraswamy himself was an important scholar of Mughal painting, amassing an important collection that was eventually acquired by the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, where he worked as a curator during the latter half of his scholarly life.[58]

The rediscovery of Mughal aesthetics by British and Indian scholars and by artists and critics associated with the Bengal School is central to understanding the work of Abdur Rahman Chughtai. His younger brother, Abdullah Chughtai, who assisted the artist during the early years of his career, also became a major scholar of Mughal and Persian art and architecture. Abdullah's scholarly research constitutes another approach to the past without which Abdur Rahman's aesthetic and imaginative re-creation of the Mughal

past cannot be fully understood. During the 1930s, Abdullah Chughtai completed his Ph.D. at the Sorbonne, studying under noted art historian Henri Focillon, whose formalist emphasis allowed ornament to assume a greater role in artistic morphology, in comparison with art historians who focused on iconography and themes.[59] Abdullah Chughtai published his 1937 study of the Taj Mahal in Belgium, based on his dissertation and written in French. A prolific scholar on Indo-Muslim visual culture, he is author of dozens of works on Mughal aesthetics and also a biographer of Abdur Rahman.[60]

BIOGRAPHY OF CHUGHTAI

Abdur Rahman Chughtai was born in 1897 in Lahore into a family descended from generations of craftsmen, architects, and decorators.[61] Beginning in 1912, he studied at the Mayo School of Art. Earlier, he apprenticed with his uncle Baba Miran Bakhsh, a *naqqash* who maintained a workshop in a chamber at the Mughal-era Wazir Khan Mosque. Here Chughtai was introduced to the practice of Mughal architectural ornamentation.[62] Beginning in 1915, Chughtai began teaching in the Mayo School in the Photo-litho Department. Samarendranath Gupta, a follower of the Bengal School who had studied with Abanindranath Tagore and participated in an expedition to Ajanta, was also teaching at the Mayo School during that period.

Beginning in 1917, Chughtai began sending his work regularly to Calcutta for publication. The presence of his work in Calcutta-based journals became pivotal to his early success—his paintings published in *Modern Review* starting in 1917 brought him national prominence.[63] Most volumes of *Chatterjee's Picture Albums* also contained Chughtai's work—he was the only Muslim artist whose work was consistently showcased in these volumes.[64] Chughtai's success and self-definition as an artist was thus forged in the matrix of print culture, which he continued to deploy throughout his life. He also visited Calcutta.[65] According to Abdullah Chughtai, who met Abdur Rahman at the railway station upon his return from Calcutta, Chughtai was deeply impressed by the quality and dedication of the Calcutta-based artists. But, "despite the headiness of his visit there, his determination to work separately from, and in competition with the Tagore school [Bengal School], was already evident," notes Abdullah.[66]

Chughtai's relationship with Gupta was also beginning to deteriorate, eventually leading Chughtai to completely abandon teaching. Gupta's family was well established in Lahore and had excellent relations with the city elite, and Gupta himself was very active in spearheading artistic activities in Lahore.

He had introduced painting as a subject in the Mayo School and was the only English-speaking painting teacher at the time. Appointed vice principal in 1914 and serving as principal from 1929 to 1942, Gupta had brought Bengal School wash techniques to Lahore. He was also appointed assistant curator of the Lahore Museum in 1921. Gupta was in charge of the acquisition of major collections of Sikh and Pahari miniature paintings at the museum, publishing a catalog of its painting collection in 1922. Several of his paintings were also published in *Chatterjee's Picture Albums*.[67] He was one of the organizers of the Punjab Fine Arts Society in 1918, which was based on the example of artistic societies that the Bengal School and the Indian Society of Oriental Art adherents were actively organizing elsewhere.

The 1920 exhibition of the Punjab Fine Arts Society showcased artists from the Punjab and also showed works mailed from other parts of India, including works by the Bengal School artists based in Calcutta. Chughtai's work attracted considerable attention at this exhibition in the press.[68] According to art historian Marcella Nesom, Chughtai participated in no fewer than eleven exhibitions between 1920 and 1924, frequently winning awards.[69] Chughtai's growing unease toward Gupta probably stemmed from rivalry regarding Gupta's established position versus Chughtai's rising prominence, and this feeling was reciprocated by Gupta. And the ill feeling might well have also been motivated by the Hindu nationalist ideologies espoused by Gupta, which portrayed Mughal culture as insufficiently authentic. Moreover, Chughtai was determined not to be subsumed within the Bengal School of Painting.[70] Nesom suggests that Chughtai's promotion of the "Punjab School," which consisted of Muslim artists, was intended as a challenge to the dominance of Hindu artists in the Bengal School.[71] Finally, the very closeness of the two figures in their painterly aesthetic and in their professional careers was probably a factor, since both competed in the same exhibitions.[72]

Chughtai had applied for a medical leave of absence from the Mayo School in order to prepare works for the major British Empire Exhibition to be held at Wembley in 1924. When Gupta learned of his visiting a cinema one evening, apparently healthy, he reported Chughtai's infraction to the Mayo School. Chughtai ignored official requests for explanation of his conduct, eventually leading him to permanently sever his relationship with the Mayo School. Gupta participated in the Wembley exhibition as an artist from Bengal, and Chughtai entered as an artist from the Punjab, further straining their relationship.[73] The exhibition was significant for Chughtai's career. The Punjab painters had attracted attention by the quality and strength of their participation, and Chughtai's work was further praised by the media, finally permit-

ting him to secure a living through princely and market patronage rather than having to depend on government employment. According to Abdullah, the artist never again visited the Mayo School. Chughtai continued to promote the idea of a Punjab School or Lahore School into the 1930s, to the point of allegedly submitting paintings done by him for publication under pseudonyms, but the Punjab School of Painting failed to cohere as a group, and indeed, apart from Chughtai, the other artists are now largely forgotten.[74]

Thus the Punjab School failed to become a strong rival to the Bengal School, and in any case the style of painting associated with both was already coming under attack due to the rise of oil-based abstraction and modernism from the 1930s onward. The relationship between Chughtai and the Bengal School is vexed and indeed opens up larger philosophical and epistemological issues of naming and classification. Allegations of Bengal School influence haunted Chughtai.[75] Nesom has judiciously discussed the rivalry over the "Mughal" between Chughtai and Abanindranath, and the brief account presented here follows her discussion.[76] The latter was already a celebrated painter and the founder of the Bengal School and also an artist who was engaged in exploring Mughal and "Muslim" themes well before Chughtai emerged as an artist. Chughtai's challenge to Abanindranath over this appropriation of "Muslim" themes was conducted throughout his life, even to the extent of creating works on identical subjects. From works such as *Jahanara and the Taj* (Figure 1.4), published in *Rupam* in 1922 (and the subject of a hostile review by Abanindranath),[77] to Chughtai's monumental and unrealized plan to create an illustrated version of the *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*—all were themes that Abanindranath had already visited.[78] This rivalry was discursive as well, expressed in written criticism—Chughtai's critique of the Bengal School is discussed later in this chapter. Apart from the Mughal and "Muslim" themes that form the bulk of his work, Chughtai also explored the domain of Hindu mythology, a favorite Bengal School theme.

CHUGHTAI'S "HINDU" PICTURES

From the beginning of his career, Chughtai created numerous paintings illustrating Hindu mythology, such as *Yasoda* (Figure 1.5) and *Arjuna* (Figure 1.6), which exponentially extended his patronage circuit.[79] Abdullah Chughtai offers two explanations for Chughtai's choice of these motifs. On the one hand, unlike Hindus, Muslims were generally indifferent to the art of painting. On the other hand, Punjabi Muslim culture of the time was composite and syncretistic—in Muslim weddings, for example, songs celebrating

FIGURE 1.4. *Abdur Rahman Chughtai,* Jahanara and the Taj, *illustration in* Chughtai's Paintings, *1970. Watercolor on paper. Dimensions n.a. (Reproduced with permission of Arif Rahman Chughtai, © Chughtai Museum Trust, Lahore.)*

FIGURE 1.5. *Abdur Rahman Chughtai,* Yasoda, *illustration in* Chughtai's Indian Paintings, *1951. Watercolor on paper. Dimensions n.a. (Reproduced with permission of Arif Rahman Chughtai, © Chughtai Museum Trust, Lahore.)*

the love of Radha and Krishna were routinely sung. Chughtai, who possessed an extensive collection of Radha Krishna paintings, skillfully painted this theme, and these pictures sold immediately. His patrons included numerous journals, which published his works in Hindi and Bengali, as well as rulers of princely states in India. Chughtai's "Hindu" works are included in numerous collections in India but are little known in Pakistan. Chughtai also painted

FIGURE 1.6.
Abdur Rahman Chughtai, Arjuna, *illustration in* Chughtai's Indian Paintings, *1951. Watercolor on paper. Dimensions n.a. (Reproduced with permission of Arif Rahman Chughtai, © Chughtai Museum Trust, Lahore.)*

many other Hindu myths and festivals, and these works were reproduced in numerous journals and magazines. Abdullah Chughtai lists many examples of patrons actively seeking Chughtai's Hindu works, and he tells of an incident in which Chughtai offered to paint a portrait of Guru Nanak for the Maharaja of Patiala. In painting such themes, Chughtai was no different from his contemporary, Allah Bukhsh, the "Krishna painter," suggesting that painting Hindu mythology was not completely unusual for a Muslim painter during the first third of the twentieth century. In his writings, however, Chughtai remains largely silent about his "Hindu" paintings, suggesting that, unlike the "Islamic" works, the former were not painterly embodiments of his discursive values.

Finally, before the partition of India, in 1947, Chughtai considered himself nominally as a national artist but painted very few "national" themes, unlike artists such as Nandalal Bose. In this respect, overt nationalist fervor rarely influenced Chughtai. A large illustrated volume of Chughtai's "Hindu" paintings titled *Chughtai's Indian Paintings* was published in India in 1951, after partition.[80] The publication date is significant, because even after the hardening of political identities and the brutality and carnage of the partition in 1947, Chughtai, residing in Pakistan, still deemed his Indian work important enough to be issued. The duality of Chughtai's Hindu and Muslim works is thus symptomatic of the difficulties the artist faced during this time of anticolonial movements, which were structurally unable to forge a unified

struggle toward independence.[81] These Hindu works nevertheless remain significant for embodying the memory of Hindu motifs in the revival of the miniature form. This syncretism will be later rediscovered and celebrated in a new miniature revival beginning in 1990s Lahore, as briefly discussed in the epilogue of this book.

GENESIS OF THE *MURAQQAʿ-I CHUGHTAʾI*

Calcutta boasted a number of illustrated journals specializing in fine arts, but Lahore lacked such journals and a corresponding discourse on visual arts. Instead, the growing city was witness to the development of a body of Urdu writing, literary criticism, and debate. Lahore-based authors constituted a virtual galaxy of the best-known Urdu writers of the twentieth century, including figures such as Muhammad Iqbal, Sufi Tabassum, Ahmad Shah Bukhari Patras, Ghulam Abbas, Muhammad Din Tasir, and, later, Saadat Hasan Manto, Muhammad Hasan Askari, Nasir Kazmi, and Intizar Husain. Under the guidance of Tasir, Chughtai was pulled into the orbit of the literary world of the 1920s. In an essay eulogizing Tasir, Chughtai recalled:

> Tasir and myself became friends at a time when we sought each other and needed each other. During those days, the fame of modern Indian [Bengal School] painting was at its peak and was pulling every cultivated person [*ahl-i zauq*] towards it. . . . But as there was no Muslim name associated with this movement, it was a cause of great disappointment to the discerning [*ahl-i nazar*], especially students. When my first picture was published in *Modern Review*, I received encouraging letters from Kathiawar, Bombay, Jaipur, Peshawar, and Ceylon. My meeting with Tasir was a result [of his seeing my published work].[82]

By the 1920s, Chughtai was firmly entrenched in the universe of Urdu literary figures: the publication of the *Muraqqaʿ-i Chughtaʾi*, possibly the most significant published work Chughtai produced during his long career, is a direct result of this engagement. Understanding the genesis and impact of this work is key to situating the artist's mature career.

Published in 1928, the widely celebrated *Muraqqaʿ-i Chughtaʾi* is an illustrated edition of the Urdu poetry [*divan*] of the poet Mirza Ghalib (1797–1869).[83] In undertaking this project, Chughtai was undoubtedly guided by his belief that "Muslims have contributed more to art by way of *muraqqaʿ*s and books than any other nation."[84] Produced with great care, with an English foreword by the poet Iqbal, the volume reproduced the complete *divan*, with

more than thirty full-page illustrations, most of them in color (Plate 1, Figures 1.7–1.9).

Ghalib, whose poetry is considered a masterpiece of the Urdu *ghazal* (lyric form), lived during the nineteenth century, was attached to the court of the last Mughal emperor, and composed his Urdu and Persian poetry based on strictly traditional poetic forms and tropes, exhibiting little thematic concern for the rising sun of the British empire. Nevertheless, since Ghalib wrote his works during the dissolution of Muslim political power, the inwardness, difficulty, and philosophical character of his poetry can be understood as an internal, formal response to the widespread crisis of Muslim life in nineteenth-century India.

The term *muraqqaʿ* is significant, denoting codex albums composed in Timurid and Safavid Persia and in Mughal India.[85] These albums, which can be considered scrapbooks for elite connoisseurship, were compilations of esteemed and varied examples of painting and calligraphy, framed in elaborate decorated borders.[86] In Indian albums, prized examples of Persian and Indian painting and calligraphy were inserted, and the album functioned as an important aesthetic benchmark for an age in which mechanically reproduced samples of work were absent.[87] Usually written by officials or calligraphers, the prefaces to Timurid, Safavid, and Mughal albums provide an important source of historical information about individual calligraphers, their techniques, and their social status.[88] Among the Timurid and Safavid albums, for example, the six classical (pre-*nastaʿliq*) styles of calligraphy are routinely mentioned, along with seven styles of painting.[89] Among the Mughals, the emperor Jahangir (reigned 1605–27) in particular assembled a number of albums containing some of the finest examples of painting and calligraphy.[90]

Chughtai reinvented the *muraqqaʿ* in the age of mechanical reproduction through considerable effort, enacting numerous technical and aesthetic transformations. The publication marks shifts in patronage and the primacy of print culture in the making of an artist during the early to mid-twentieth century. The idea for illustrating Ghalib's *divan* emerged not from fellow painters but from Chughtai's encounters and informal discussions with his literary friends. Urdu writers and Chughtai patronized an outdoor betel nut kiosk, where they would stand around chewing betel leaf and conversing about art and literature.[91] They also began the practice of meeting at Chughtai's house during the afternoon. The author Ghulam Abbas, who attended these circles, recounts that Chughtai would come down his stairs carrying some of his un-

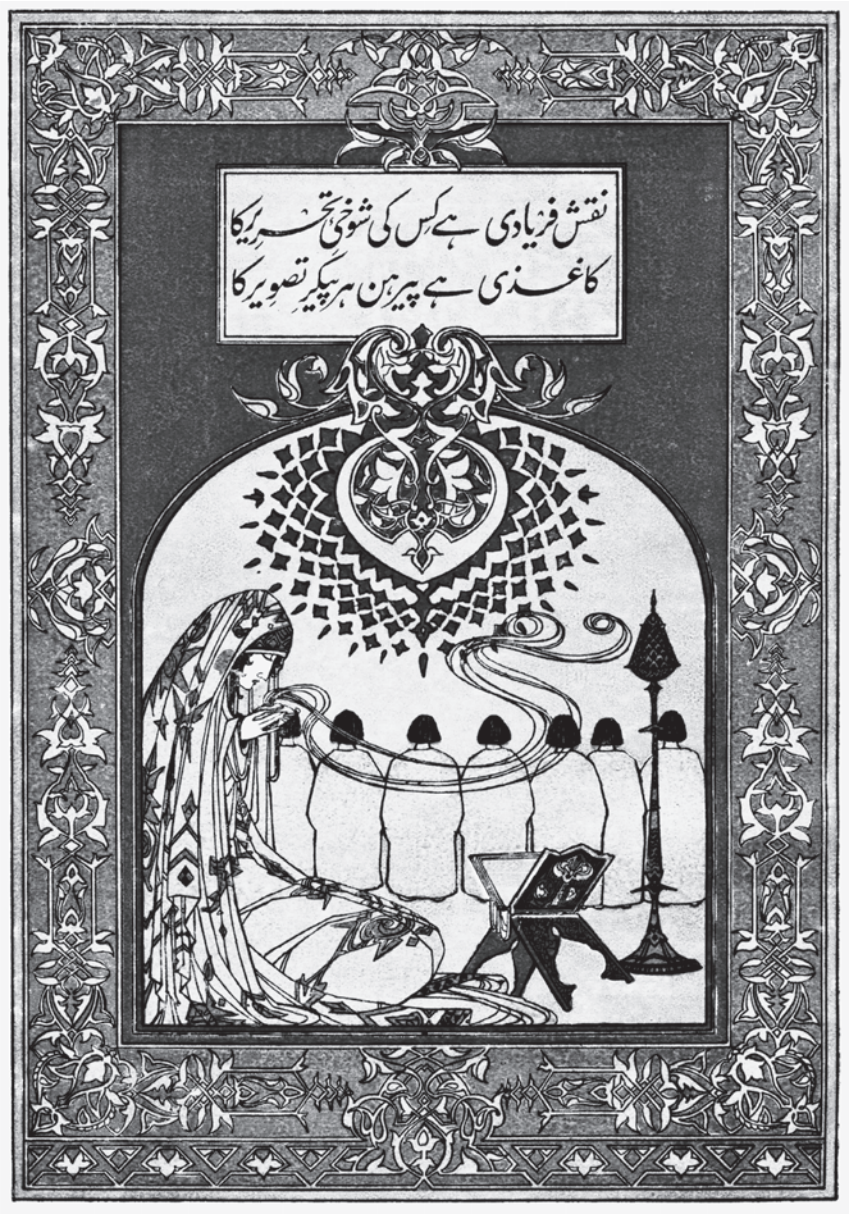


FIGURE 1.7. *Abdur Rahman Chughtai, illustration and illumination of the first couplet of* Divan-i Ghalib (Urdu), *in* Muraqqaʿ-i Chughtaʾi, *1928. 23 × 16 cm. (Reproduced with permission of Arif Rahman Chughtai, © Chughtai Museum Trust, Lahore.)*

FIGURE 1.8. *Abdur Rahman Chughtai,* The Old Lamp. *Illustration in* Muraqqaʿ-i Chughtaʾi, *1928. Watercolor on paper. Dimensions n.a. (Reproduced with permission of Arif Rahman Chughtai, © Chughtai Museum Trust, Lahore.)*

FIGURE 1.9.
Abdur Rahman Chughtai, illustration in Muraqqaʿ-i Chughtaʾi, *1928. Watercolor on paper. Dimensions n.a. (Reproduced with permission of Arif Rahman Chughtai, © Chughtai Museum Trust, Lahore.)*

finished paintings, which he would continue to work on during the meandering conversation. Until his death in 1950, Tasir remained a central figure in this group and, indeed, in Lahore's literary life: "Tasir possessed an encyclopedic grasp of Eastern and Western poetry and literature. Moreover, he had also conducted a deep study of Western art. Consequently the conversation would go on endlessly, traversing all manner of artistic and scholarly subjects. Jokes and merriment interlaced the discussion. The scheme for the printing of the *Muraqqaʿ-i Chughtaʾi* was conceived in that unknown neighborhood of Lahore, and was also realized at that very location."[92]

According to Abdullah Chughtai, Tasir was instrumental in motivating the artist to undertake this project.[93] One curious factor was the edition of Ghalib published in 1925 in Delhi, which had been printed in Germany and included a portrait of Ghalib as its frontispiece (Figure 1.10).[94] Tasir brought this edition to show Chughtai, greatly incensing the artist, who recalls:

> I sarcastically said to Tasir, "Do you like this portrait/idol [*murat*]?" Upon hearing the word *murat*, Tasir sized me up and asked "Why, have you seen this *murat* previously?" I replied, "It makes no difference whether or not I have seen it before. It epitomizes the depth of our bad taste [*bad mazaqi ki intiha*]. Such *murat*s have assaulted the past and future of our art [*hamaray fan kay mustaqbil aur mazi ko zabardast dhakka laga hai*]. If this edition of Ghalib had belonged to me, I would immediately destroy this portrait." I stated to Tasir, "You will tear up this portrait before you even reach home." When we were departing, Tasir turned and looked at me with sincerity and passion [*khulus aur valvala*]. . . . The next time I met Tasir, he mentioned right away that he had indeed destroyed it before returning to his home.[95]

FIGURE 1.10.
Anonymous German artist, portrait of Ghalib, frontispiece of Divan-i Ghalib (Urdu), *1925. Dimensions n.a.*

Derived from Sanskrit, the word *murat* bears the connotations of a Hindu sculpture or figurine, but the term is used here not to deride Hindu iconography but rather to negatively characterize Ghalib's image. Neither Chughtai nor Tasir specify exactly why they found this portrait of Ghalib so distasteful, but it might well be its late nineteenth-century *academic* rendering. If so, this exchange exemplifies how the portrayal of the poet and his poetry in a flattened oriental style was emerging as a pictorial value for Chughtai and Tasir at this time. Abdullah Chughtai remarks that this meeting served as a key impetus for Chughtai to undertake the *Muraqqaʿ* project. Tasir had recited some of Ghalib's poetry and insisted that Ghalib's *Divan* must be illustrated, which Chughtai duly promised to do.[96]

At Chughtai's house, Tasir began looking through Chughtai's existing paintings, matching a selection of them with Ghalib's verses that he understood to be in correspondence. Thus some existing works were selected, but Tasir insisted that the artist needed to create new paintings directly associated with specific verses by Ghalib.[97] One immediate problem was securing an authoritative text of Ghalib's *divan*. The group sought the advice of Ghulam Rasul Mihr, a respected Ghalib scholar, to ensure that they possessed a reliable text. This is the sort of problem scholars often face when preparing critical printed editions of handwritten manuscript texts, and its recurrence here exemplifies

how vestiges of manuscript traditions lingered within the emergent print culture of the twentieth century. Indeed, until recently, Urdu has primarily been printed by hand-calligraphed pages reproduced via lithography, rather than by typesetting. The break with the manuscript form was thus not as sharp, and the stylistic particularities of mostly anonymous scribes continued to be reproduced in print until the 1980s.

Chughtai involved his two brothers and other members of his extended family in what was clearly shaping up to be a massive undertaking. A calligrapher had to be selected to write the text, and this output had to be regularly overseen. Suitable paper had to be chosen and ordered to be imported from Europe via a trading firm, and since the Chughtai family did not possess sufficient funds to fully pay for the paper stock, arrangements had to be made with a bank to work out an installment-based delivery and payment plan. To print the text, the family members decided to set up a press in a room in their own house. They ordered a press to be imported from London via Bombay, but when this press failed to live up to Abdur Rahman's expectations, it was resold locally, and another imported press was secured from a local supplier. To run the machine, they also needed a commercial-grade electrical connection in their home, which was finally approved by the city utility after three months of persistence. Samples of materials for the covers of both the normal and the deluxe edition were requested from a Manchester-based firm, and after great deliberation, Abdur Rahman placed the order. The binding of the book was entrusted to a local firm.

And all this careful logistical effort was devoted only to the printing of the text and the binding of the book. The images themselves, the most important component of the project, could not be printed in India. After much deliberation, the group finally settled on a London-based firm and carefully dispatched the original paintings to London by post, enlisting the help of a cooperative postal official. Securing adequate funds was crucial. With the help of gallery owner and writer G. Venkatachalam, the Maharani of Cooch Behar reportedly contributed a considerable sum of money toward the publication in exchange for acquiring a number of the original paintings that were to be reproduced in the *Muraqqaʿ*.[98] This effort finally resulted in the printing of 210 deluxe signed editions priced at 100 rupees each and a larger number of normal editions priced at 17 rupees. As an artist formed by print culture for whom circulation of his work was vital, Chughtai's decision to produce two editions, a deluxe edition and a more affordable and populist one, was a strategy he followed throughout his life.

Chughtai's pioneering use of print culture sought to bring a classical

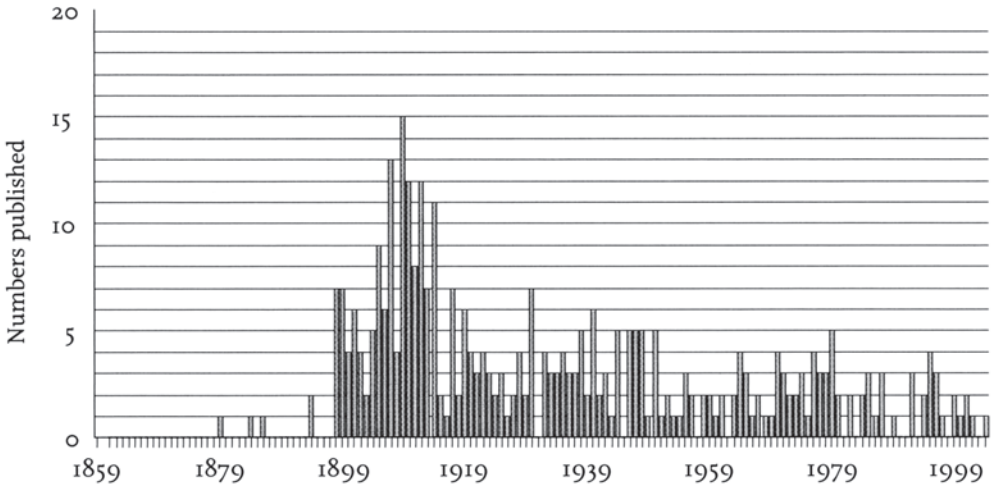


FIGURE 1.11. *History of the publication of illustrated editions of FitzGerald's* Rubaiyat. *(From William H. Martin and Sandra Mason,* The Art of Omar Khayyam: Illustrating FitzGerald's "Rubaiyat" *[2007], 14. Courtesy I. B. Tauris.)*

Mughal and Islamic artistic form into modernity. But for the *muraqqaʿ* form, a distinctive Muslim contribution to world culture, the heavy reliance on imported techniques of production and reproduction demonstrate the difficulty and the considerable labor needed to transform a manuscript form into a modern, mechanically produced book. The technical and aesthetic reliance on Europe for this production of the "East" also indicates the impossibility in modernity of disengaging Europe from its others. European art and design since the later nineteenth century had itself already been heavily influenced by orientalism, in such domains as painting (Matisse), book illustration, and fashion.[99] Indeed, illustrated editions of FitzGerald's *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* had formed a veritable industry for several decades, peaking during the first two decades of the twentieth century (Figure 1.11), and the formal and thematic preoccupations of the Bengal School and Chughtai need to be situated accordingly.[100] It is precisely at this convergence of the material and aesthetic realms of the East and West, however, that Chughtai and Iqbal asserted their difference more forcefully.

IQBAL'S FOREWORD TO THE *MURAQQAʿ-I CHUGHTAʾI*

The events that led to Iqbal contributing a foreword to the *Muraqqaʿ* reveal the bewilderment the Urdu literary intelligentsia faced when encountering visual art. The relationship between Chughtai and Iqbal is multifaceted

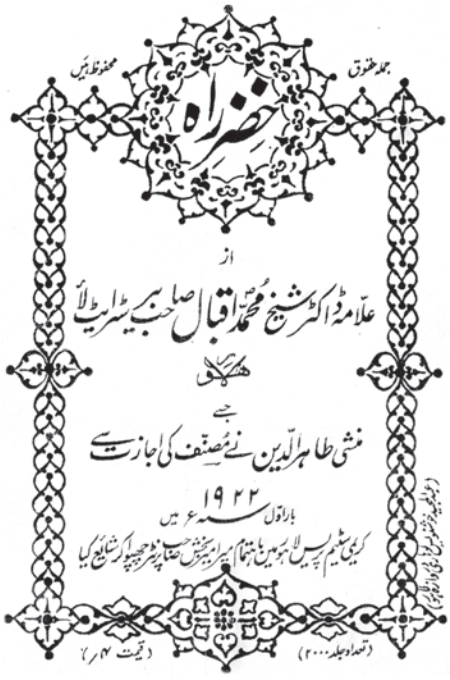


FIGURE 1.12.
Abdur Rahman Chughtai, cover design for Iqbal's poem Khizr-i rah, *1922. (Reproduced with permission of Arif Rahman Chughtai, © Chughtai Museum Trust, Lahore.)*

and was sustained by Chughtai well after the death of Iqbal. (It culminated in the publication of the monumental work *ʿAmal-i Chughtaʾi* in 1968, which the artist claimed fulfilled the wishes of the deceased poet.) Chughtai had met Iqbal much earlier and had designed the cover of the publication of Iqbal's 1922 poem *Khizr-i rah* (Figure 1.12). And a version of the artist's painting *The Story Teller* (Plate 3) served as inspiration for Iqbal's poem on the Taj Mahal.[101] But it was Tasir who persuaded the reluctant Iqbal to write the foreword in English, even though Iqbal in the beginning had vehemently refused the task. The choice of writing in English is telling in itself, suggesting that Chughtai and Tasir had a wider circulation in mind of a work whose main textual element, Ghalib's verse, was not translated. Apart from Iqbal's foreword, the *Muraqqaʿ* consists of an introduction by Dr. James Henry Cousins and an introduction in Urdu by Chughtai.

From the accounts by Abdur Rahman and Abdullah Chughtai, one senses not only the excitement but also the trepidation with which Iqbal faced his task. Iqbal began with a study of paintings and scholarship on art. For example, in a letter to Abdullah Chughtai dated December 7, 1926, Iqbal wrote: "If you possess a printed volume on Indian paintings, kindly lend it to me,

and if you don't have a volume, perhaps a few images of famous works will do. An essay should also accompany them. I want to know what sort of subject matter Indian painters usually choose. . . . I especially need the names of Bengal School painters. And if you have a book on Mughal art, kindly bring it."[102] Abdullah Chughtai provided Iqbal with all volumes of *Chatterjee's Picture Albums*, along with miscellaneous images. As he recounted, "This was a task of great responsibility, as no such book had ever been published until now. . . . We had to hold numerous meetings. Abdur Rahman was becoming fed-up with all this, but Tasir and myself continued to insist that we must persuade Iqbal to undertake this task." Iqbal continued to request materials from Abdullah.[103] Abdur Rahman framed some of his paintings and brought them to Iqbal for him to study, probably to encourage the reluctant Iqbal to attend to the matter. In Abdur Rahman's recollection, Iqbal's hesitations led him to suggest that Tasir write up the text, to which Iqbal would attach his own signature. But, despite a number of drafts that Tasir produced, Iqbal was unsatisfied and eventually composed his own text, overnight, which was printed in the *Muraqqaʿ-i Chughtaʾi* as "Foreword by Dr. Sir Mohammad Iqbal—The Poet of the East," a phrase often used to refer to Iqbal.[104] The association of Chughtai with Iqbal also led to the former being hailed as "Artist of the East."[105] The significance and the difference between the self-orientalisms of Iqbal and Chughtai are discussed later in this chapter.

Despite these efforts by the literary intelligentsia to compel Iqbal to produce an aesthetic and art historical text, the foreword is a disappointing essay and reads as if it were written as an afterthought, although it was far from a simple matter for the poet to write it. The essay, which is less than three pages long, reveals Iqbal's discomfort with Chughtai's art, being basically a cursory exposition of the poet's philosophy of creation. Iqbal remained ambivalent regarding the merits of Chughtai's illustrations of Ghalib.[106] Claiming that he was "not competent enough to judge the technical side of painting," the poet did write that he found Chughtai's paintings "remarkable" in that as "Art [ought to be] subservient to life and personality," Chughtai might be "the ideal artist in whom Love reveals itself as a unity of Beauty and Power."

However, it is patently incongruous to associate imagery of power with Chughtai, whose paintings are saturated with a pervasive atmosphere of eroticism and lassitude, and this incongruity might well be the reason for the poet's reticence in discussing the paintings themselves. Moreover, Iqbal is generally unimpressed by Muslim achievements in the arts, even from the premodern era:

> And in so far as the cultural history of Islam is concerned, it is my belief that, with the single exception of Architecture, the art of Islam (Music, Painting and even Poetry) is yet to be born—the art, that is to say, which aims at the human assimilation of Divine attributes. . . . There are, however, indications to show that the young artist of the Punjab is already on the way to feel his responsibility as an artist. He is only twenty-nine yet. What his art will become when he reaches the maturer age of forty, the future alone will disclose. Meanwhile all those who are interested in his work will keenly watch his forward movement.[107]

This is certainly an evasive endorsement of Chughtai. In his own Urdu introduction to the *Muraqqaʿ-i Chughtaʾi*, Chughtai had praised, among others, Bihzad's use of imagination as a guide for pictorial depiction, rather than direct observation of reality itself.[108] Chughtai—by consciously following the path of imaginative depiction that he ascribed to the legendary Bihzad—inserts himself in a history of painting that traverses the Timurid, Safavid, and Mughal eras. Iqbal's ambivalent remarks on Islamic painting in his foreword do carry critical overtones on modern painting, which are reiterated in his last collection of Urdu poetry, *Zarb-i kalim*, published in 1937. *Zarb-i kalim* contains a number of poems in which Iqbal complains of the lack of life-affirming art in South Asia.[109] For example, the following couplet from the poem "Musavvir" ("Painter") contains a reference to contemporary painting:

> I am extremely sad that the Bihzads of today,
> Have lost touch with the intoxication/freshness of the timeless past/
> beginning of creation [*surur-i azali*].[110]

This tension between Iqbal's philosophy of dynamism and the evocative stasis of the past represented by Chughtai emerges again in *ʿAmal-i Chughtaʾi*, and Iqbal's uncertain position on the merits of the works of "today's Bihzads," and thus by implication, on Chughtai's art, might well have exerted a formative influence later on the artist Sadequain (as examined in chapter 3). Nevertheless, Chughtai's *Muraqqaʿ* is significant for orienting the artist's career toward the Urdu literary past and in relation to the emergent Urdu literary criticism. During the first third of the twentieth century, the Bengal School had pioneered the appropriation of the Mughal visual past artistically, and scholars of Mughal art and architecture were systematically exploring Mughal painting and architecture. In the aftermath of the *Muraqqaʿ* publication, Chughtai and his brother Abdullah became more deeply engaged with the history of the Mughal visual tradition, the latter in his prolific writings on Indo-Persian art

and architecture. In his critical essays, the artist himself had become increasingly concerned with how a modern Muslim art might engage this legacy.

Chughtai followed the *Muraqqaʿ* with a less expensive edition of Ghalib's *divan*, the *Naqsh-i Chughta'i*, which consisted mostly of black-and-white reproductions of works that were different from the ones in the *Muraqqaʿ-i Chughta'i*. *Naqsh-i Chughta'i* was first issued in 1935 with nineteen images, only one of which was in color. After the independence of Pakistan, the book was twice reissued in a revised edition during the 1960s, with new images—six color and sixteen monochrome.[111] The interchangeability of the illustrations in these works suggests that individual works were less important for Chughtai, but it is precisely their reproducibility as a printed series that provided them with a meaningful frame. Apart from these and the major *ʿAmal-i Chughta'i*, Chughtai also issued a volume in 1940, *Chughtai's Paintings*, reprinted in 1970, and the volume *Chughtai's Indian Paintings*, which was issued in 1951 in India after the partition of India and Pakistan. The artist trained in etching and printmaking techniques during his trips to Europe in the 1930s and developed an important body of work in that medium as well. In printmaking, as critics have noted, his propensity for the line was a natural ally.

EMERGENT ART HISTORY

With the publication of the *Muraqqaʿ*, Chughtai, now a highly successful artist, was fully drawn into the literary universe of Lahore. He designed innumerable book covers for leading writers[112] and contributed to numerous emerging Urdu journals, including *Nairang-i khayal*, *Karavan*, *Alamgir*, *Naqush*, and *Mah-i nau* (Figure 1.13).[113] The years from the early part of the twentieth century to the death of Chughtai in 1975 coincided with Lahore's ascendancy in the field of Urdu literature, and, as author Anvar Sadid reiterates, Chughtai participated in this atmosphere as "an enthusiastic member involved in its activities." The artist was continually concerned with the promotion of literary journals, frequently contributing cover designs gratis and paying for subscriptions as a show of support.[114]

Instead of independent evaluation of visual art, a literary framework began to provide a substitute for evaluating Chughtai's work. With little connection with the Mayo School and unease toward the emerging abstractionists and post-cubist modernists, the artist increasingly drew his references from the Persian and Mughal painting tradition, from Ghalib and Iqbal, and from the world of literary journals and its intelligentsia. Characteristically, the Majlis-i Taraqqi-yi Adab, a society that promoted Urdu literature, published the only

FIGURE 1.13.
Abdur Rahman Chughtai, cover design for N. M. Rashid's poetry collection Mavara, *ca. 1940. (Reproduced with permission of Arif Rahman Chughtai, © Chughtai Museum Trust, Lahore.)*

volume of critical essays on Chughtai, and most of the essays (with the exception of a few translations from European art historians) were contributed by eminent Urdu writers and literary critics. Salim Akhtar, for example, provided an analysis of each painting in the *Muraqqaʿ-i Chughta'i*, comparing the effects evoked by the painting with the meaning of the verse associated with it and judging how well the picture interpreted the particular pair of verses by Ghalib. In this respect, Akhtar's analysis is not unlike a *sharh*, a traditional commentary on a *divan* of a poet, which explicates every verse of the entire *divan* exhaustively.[115]

However, the launching of the journals *Nairang-i khayal* in 1924 and *Karavan* in 1933 by Tasir in collaboration with Chughtai were important efforts by the pair to include visual art as an integral dimension of the emergent intellectual culture of the early to mid-twentieth century.[116] *Nairang-i khayal* included a Chughtai image in its inaugural volume and in subsequent issues. Tasir was keenly interested in the interrelationships among painting, literature, and other creative arts.[117] Chughtai's work had clearly provided inspira-

tion for Tasir's initial interest in the visual arts.[118] *Karavan* was a major effort by Tasir, aided by Chughtai and others, to launch an even more ambitious journal addressing the full spectrum of modern culture, but only two annual volumes were published before it ceased publication.[119] Nesom has argued that Chughtai was abroad when the first issue of *Karavan* was published in 1933, which featured only one work of art by Chughtai (although two of his poems and a short story were included). More significant was the inclusion of essays and criticism dealing with painting, including "'Bihzad'" by Abdullah Chughtai, "Art" by William Blake, "A Perfect Painter" by an anonymous Hindu artist, "Modern Indian Painting" by Mirza Hasan Askari, "Criticism on Painting" by Mian Abdul Rafi, "Art" by James McNeill Whistler, and notes on painting from the writings of Cezanne.[120] Pakistani art critic Akbar Naqvi considers Tasir to be "a pioneer, if not the inventor, of Urdu art criticism," in recognition of his efforts to write and promote analysis of visual art.[121] In exploring Tasir's views on art criticism, his preface to the first issue of *Karavan* merits examination.

Tasir claimed that the mission of *Karavan* was to publish experimental essays and literature that were likely to be rejected by other journals; he nevertheless insisted on maintaining a publication of superior quality—being produced only annually would provide the editor with sufficient time to make a good selection. Tasir emphasized that young poets were especially encouraged to submit their poems, and he requested early submission, in order that the poems might be "decorated and balanced [*taz'in o tarsi'*]" according to their subject matter in future issues, which was not possible in the first issue, since Chughtai had been traveling in Europe. Tasir characterized the main aim of Chughtai's trip to Europe as producing an illustrated edition of Omar Khayyam's *Rubaiyat*: "The sincere manner in which Europe has welcomed this Asian artist has posed such a challenge [*davat-i mubarazat*] to all of Asia that it can be answered only by Chughtai's *Khayyam*."[122] Despite a lack of financial resources, without which nothing is possible in Europe, noted Tasir, Chughtai succeeded in receiving great honor without any "propaganda,"[123] which no other Indian artist had yet received. Tasir also listed the activities of Abdullah Chughtai, who accompanied his brother, as engaged in scholarly research and the preparation of two books on Mughal art, including his monograph on the Taj Mahal.

Tasir accorded great importance to the role of visual art in *Karavan*. He had stressed in an earlier essay that "Urdu is utterly bereft of any theory [*nazariya*] of [visual] aesthetics [*jamaliyat*]."[124] Since there were few galleries [*tas-*

vir khana] in India, it was all the more imperative to publish masterpieces of art, in order to familiarize "untrained minds." But few editors of other journals were able to judge the merits of visual art and, moreover, deemed efforts to understand visual art as an unworthy task:

> Many educated people are perfectly comfortable purchasing commentaries [*sharh*] on Ghalib's poetry. But when looking at pictures, they imagine that their untrained eye [*kori ankh*] is sufficiently discerning [*sahib-i nazar*]. While they struggle to understand the meaning of difficult poetic verses, when looking at a picture that addresses something beyond their very limited observations, they have no hesitation in immediately declaring in exasperation, "We don't understand it." . . . But if one does not strive to understand something, it will never become meaningful. Painting especially is very different from other fine arts. A poet uses words, which everyone else also uses. Music is based on sounds/voices [*asvat*] that everyone produces. But throughout our life we remain unacquainted with the emergence of line and color. This is why a poem can be understood with words, but a picture cannot be similarly understood. But textual explanation [*sharh*] of a verse cannot create an imprint [*naqsh*] on the heart, as explanation is [merely] an intellectual exercise [*dimaghi fiʿl*] but verse is an amalgamation of emotion [*jazbat ka muraqqaʿ*]. . . . Until one is introduced to "exemplary" verse, one will be unable to develop the capacity to judge between good and bad poetry.

Tasir proceeded to stress that viewing exemplary images was necessary to train viewers to understand the objectives [*maʿruzat*] of painting. Otherwise, their observations on art would remain based on literalist readings of visual images and would be "exactly analogous to that Europe-afflicted [*europe zada*] young man who, by drawing a [literal] cartoon [of imagery of the *ghazal*'s beloved] with an arrow for an eyelash, a dagger for an eyebrow, and a narcissus for an eye, thought that he had 'permanently demolished the poetry of Iran and India.' But our journals, far from offering correct criticism [*tanqid*], are unable even to recognize the names of artists, and in their ignorance publish the masterpieces of Bihzad and Botticelli next to the obscenities of Frith[125] and [Ravi] Varma."[126] Here, Tasir excoriates sentimental and illusionist paintings exemplified by Frith and Varma, recognizing painting's visual codes in sympathy with the *ghazal*'s symbolic universe, thus privileging metaphoric and allegorical readings of visual art over realism. In order to guide writers and cultural leaders, Tasir announced his intention to publish trans-

lated Western essays in *Karavan*, putting into practice the Persian maxim: "Appropriate from what is pure and repel what is impure," implying that he was keen on worthy essays from any source or location.[127] More surprising is Tasir's interest in photography. "Painting, sculpture, and drawing are established as visual fine arts for some time now. In our modern age, photography . . . seeks to transcend its mechanical, reproductive aspect in order to create possibilities for the imagination and reason [*dil o dimagh*]. . . . There are many latent possibilities [*mukhfi imkanat*] in it."[128] Accordingly, the journal published a number of photographs deemed to be significant as works of art, again departing from deploying realist photography as an evidentiary or indexical medium.

Tasir's intellectual scope and his vision of catalyzing art criticism in Urdu, was however, short-lived. The second issue of *Karavan* included extensive contributions by Chughtai—two artworks and numerous decorative borders framing pages of text and poetry. Unlike Tasir, however, the new editor, Majid Malik, was only incidentally concerned with visual arts. Malik's introduction made no mention whatsoever of Chughtai's extensive artistic contributions to the second issue and merely listed the included visual art essays—"The Art of Filmmaking" by Agha Abdul Hamid and three essays "painstakingly researched" by Abdullah Chughtai, "The Architects of the Taj," "Gentile Bellini," and "Islamic Painting."[129] *Karavan* ceased publication after this second issue, ending a remarkable publishing experiment that Abdullah Chughtai claimed would never be repeated. The demise of the journal meant that there was no longer any Urdu journal seriously focused on the visual arts, a situation that continues today, although literary journals have included occasional essays on art.[130] In general, art criticism has been either written in English and published in illustrated magazines and newspapers or, when written in Urdu, has continued to privilege artists and work that forge a relationship to literature, rather than attending to artistic form as an independent value in its own right. Thus the collected essays on Chughtai, for example, are written either originally in English by Western scholars such as James Cousins, Tamara Talbot Rice, and Basil Gray or by eminent Urdu writers and critics such as Vazir Agha, Faiz Ahmad Faiz, Anvar Sadid, and Vahid Quraishi (Figure 1.14). Agha Abdul Hamid, scholar and brother of artist Zubeida Agha, has also commented on the failure of art criticism, accusing it of consisting of "mostly poetry, but little criticism," to the degree that essays persistently fail to identify the most rudimentary aspects of the artist or the work.[131] This critical failure to institute a durable tradition of art criticism has meant that

FIGURE 1.14. *Abdur Rahman Chughtai (dressed in a suit and tie) attending an exhibition on Muhammad Iqbal at Hyderabad Deccan, 1948. (Reproduced with permission of Arif Rahman Chughtai, © Chughtai Museum Trust, Lahore.)*

the modernists who rebelled against Chughtai were also compelled to work out a visual aesthetic without a prepared discursive ground. The implications of this are discussed in subsequent chapters.

AESTHETIC VALUES OF CHUGHTAI'S ORIENT

Chughtai and his critics have also perceived painterly values in his work that distance him from the Bengal School, and they have sought to place him in continuity with Islamic art. Critics saw Chughtai blazing a new way of connecting tradition with the present and expressed their amazement at the very possibility of interpreting poetry in visual images. The broader reference to tradition was itself seen as complex, referring to the Persian and Mughal achievements in art and architecture, the symbolic imagery of Urdu poetry,

and the Hindu and Buddhist visual heritage and Rajput painting of India.[132] But Chughtai and his critics have foregrounded the Islamic element. According to art historian Tamara Talbot Rice, the artist made numerous and substantial contributions to Islamic art. He had not sought simply to return to the past, but by his emphasis on individuation of the figure he had surpassed even Bihzad.[133] Yaqub Zaki also considered the task before Chughtai to be more difficult than that of the legendary Bihzad, arguing that "Chughtai's art evokes a complete civilization, in the same manner in which painters such as [Antoine] Watteau, [François] Boucher, and [Jean-Honoré] Fragonard had evoked the Ancien Régime in France. . . . Chughtai has reached much further back from Ghalib's era, to create links with [the Mughal] era in which Muslim civilization in India was at its zenith." Vahid Quraishi noted influences beyond South Asia, suggesting that Chughtai's art was deeply shaped by the 'Abbasid-era stories, *A Thousand and One Nights*, and was saturated in an atmosphere of a world of enchanted magic [*tilsimi rang*].[134] But this past was not re-created without melancholy. In Chughtai's thematic and affective re-creation of the past, Zaki discerned a major shift: "Although [Mughal] civilization possessed a manly, active dimension, we find no trace of this in Chughtai's art. . . . He has no interest in depicting battle scenes and sieges of forts, or in painting portraits of rulers in a manner in which they were virtually deified," an observation also made by Tamara Talbot Rice.[135] "Instead, Chughtai portrays the melancholy beauties of courtly life, who are saturated with a pervasive atmosphere of self-absorption. . . . Emotion is frequently expressed in Chughtai by the unruly line of the dress, whereas the face is stony, impassive."[136] Vazir Agha and Agha Abdul Hamid underscored the sense of stasis that pervades not only Chughtai's paintings but also his fictional writings.[137] And Salim Akhtar claimed that Chughtai's woman was not a familiar figure from everyday life but a picturization of the classical *ghazal*'s metaphors of the beloved.[138]

Critics have thus identified how Islamicate and Persianate aesthetics, Mughal nostalgia, and Urdu poetic symbolism in Chughtai's world create an internal, idealized dreamworld of beauty. Chughtai himself considered his work to have given direction again to "our painting," which had "lost its way for some three centuries."[139] Figurative work, especially in the case of the female figure, was seen not from the viewpoint of realism but from woman identified as the symbol of the beloved of the *ghazal*, who is not a realist or bodily figure but an "other," a sum of symbols and metaphors, totally self-absorbed and indifferent, even sadistic, in inducing madness and ecstasy in the poet.[140]

The modernizers of Urdu who emerged in the wake of the 1857 Mutiny had disparaged the tropes of the Urdu *ghazal*, comparing them unfavorably with the naturalism of William Wordsworth and other English poets. Altaf Husain Hali, himself an erstwhile student of Ghalib, had mounted a forceful critique of the *ghazal*'s beloved.[141] According to the prominent leftist poet Faiz Ahmad Faiz, however, Chughtai's contribution lies precisely in his recovery of tradition based on Persian, Central Asian, and Mughal motifs. Rather than simply copying or reproducing this heritage, Chughtai gathered the "motifs, symbols, and metaphors" of various Islamic decorative arts in his work, creating a new synthesis. Faiz counters Hali's critique by saying that Chughtai rendered the beloved in line and color in a more ravishing actualization [*alam-i vujud*] than that of the *ghazal*'s imagined beloved [*alam-i tasavvur*].[142] For Faiz, this nostalgia had an efficacy, in "opening the door to the lost mirages of our civilization, of which we had only a tenuous relationship, but whose forms were disappearing as if they were abandoned buildings."[143] Within this dreamworld, especially in Chughtai's later work, the picture plane is fully illuminated, without any rendered shadows. Abdullah Chughtai saw this as characteristic of oriental painting, which had no reflections either, but which was defined by lines, thus making the picture evenly and fully legible.[144] This formal quality of illumination of the whole picture evoked a sensibility of optimism [*raja'iyat*] that Abdullah Chughtai and others discerned in Chughtai's work and which Chughtai himself asserted as an important marker of his difference from the Bengal School.[145] According to the artist, a major failure of the Bengal School was that its works were suffused with "monasticism, pessimism, and despair" and "denial of the self," and, moreover, there was no artist in the Bengal School who could redirect its emphasis toward the style and form [*tarz-i nigarish*] of Mughal painting.[146]

The decorative and illuminated emphasis of Chughtai's idealism was predicated upon an essential difference between Western art and oriental art, not least by Chughtai himself. Self-orientalism was already formative in the rise of the Bengal School. Iqbal also deployed a kind of self-orientalism in his poetry, to the degree that he was known by the appellation "Poet of the East" [*sha'ir-i mashriq*]. However, Iqbal's references to the East—including his citation of the Qur'an itself—are strategic and fragmentary and ultimately do not cohere into a unified worldview. By a close reading of Iqbal's English and Persian writings, Javed Majeed has stressed Iqbal's weaving of fragments from Islamic intellectual history with wide-ranging references to Western thinkers.[147] Iqbal's later poetry persistently addresses contemporary world politics, in which figures such as Lenin conduct a dialogue with God on im-

perialism and exploitation, for example.[148] Iqbal's ideas changed during the course of his life, and the values he articulated in his later poetry denounce the evils of imperialism, capitalism, and materialism and call on Muslims to become agents of dynamism and selfhood [*khudi*]. He espouses transcending racism by celebrating an Islamic universalism, yet by his use of the terms "Arab" and "Ajam," he continues to rely upon an ethnicized history of Islam. Iqbal also glorifies historical Muslim martial conquests, which cannot be easily translated into practical politics in multireligious South Asia.[149] Nevertheless, his poetry introduced new tropes and subjects into classical forms and paved the way for more radical poetic experiments to follow. We have already seen how critics considered Chughtai to be similar to the painters of the Ancien Régime, evoking a complete prerevolutionary past. The tension between Iqbal's dynamism and Chughtai's idealism is evident in the majority of the artist's work, and especially in the illustrations of *ʿAmal-i Chughtaʾi*, the decorative stasis of which is at variance from the restless strivings of Iqbal's poetry (Plates 2, 3, 4, Figure 1.15).[150]

Chughtai's orientalism is thus considerably different from Iqbal's. In one of his more revelatory essays, Chughtai confesses that his first encounter with Europe was difficult: "Wherever I glanced, there appeared to be so many powerful influences at work [on me] that every step I took was fraught." Chughtai recalls that he was deeply pained to see that Europe had not only taken charge of its own heritage but also was busy collecting the masterpieces, *muraqqaʿ*s, and other treasures of the East with such confidence that it "seemed to me that it all truly belonged to the West, because it is in their possession." Complaining that during his formative years Indian painting had declined and, at most, the painters were lost in imitation of the West, their horizons bound by hopes of obtaining bureaucratic jobs such as becoming schoolteachers, Chughtai confessed how he found strength "in examining the timeless masterpieces that are the *muraqqaʿ*s and by the selfless devotion to their preservation by foreigners. My self confidence grew, and I managed to save myself from the enticements [*dil faraibi*] of the West." After all, had not the oriental masters produced numerous works comparable to the achievements of the Renaissance painters? But "centuries of slavery have produced such a sense of inferiority in us, that there appears to be no way out, expect to become entangled in the scandals and the accelerating progress of Europe." One of the miracles performed by the West, Chughtai bitingly notes, was "not only to have soiled our civilization and heritage, but burnt it to ashes in such a manner that, now being crippled and helpless, it has no recourse except to worship the West and imagine that only by imitation will it be able to find a

FIGURE 1.15. *Abdur Rahman Chughtai,* Mourning for Baghdad, *illustration in* ʿAmal-i Chughtaʾi, *1968. Watercolor on paper. Dimensions n.a. (Reproduced with permission of Arif Rahman Chughtai, © Chughtai Museum Trust, Lahore.)*

way out." Having discovered his own path through study of the Indo-Persian masters, Chughtai noticed that he was now perceived as a true "painter of the East" [*musavvir-i mashriq*]. "I heard many prominent [European] masters counseling me," he reports, that "the path you embarked upon with such conviction is testimony to your self-confidence and individualism. If you betray this path, it will be an atrocity [*zulm*] not only for the East, but for the West itself, and the world of art will suffer a great loss."[151]

These remarkable confessions demonstrate the degree to which Chughtai fashioned his artistic project by negotiating the mental and cultural impasse colonialism produces upon the colonized, but also the degree to which resistance to colonialism for Chughtai was also only possible by accepting its terms, indeed by further asserting difference. Self-orientalism also meant that Chughtai was unable to countenance the idea of change and the transformations of modernity, because he associated these with the West. Consequently, Chughtai was appreciative of Western Renaissance masters but was disparaging of cubism and other forms of twentieth-century experimental art.[152] "If only we had our own experimental, abstract art like the French. *Even if it wasn't anything other than* the most modern and most avant-garde art, at least it would have been ours,"[153] he lamented, emphasizing the need for ownership of aesthetic forms, even to the extent of embracing a local modernism, and despite his dismissal of Picasso and cubism as being devoid of any sense of morality.[154]

Some of Chughtai's critics and supporters took a similar stand on the essential division between Eastern and Western painting, the irrelevance of post-cubist painting, and the baleful effects Western modernism and the avant-garde had had on "our" painters.[155] To an extent, this represents a genuine impasse at which intellectuals contemporary to Chughtai found themselves. However, this antimodernism was not shared by all, especially not by the younger generation of writers and critics, who were supportive of the emergent post-cubist modernism following decolonization and independence. Moreover, the seemingly complete and exhaustive scope of Chughtai's individual achievement stood in stark contrast to the barrenness of modern Indo-Muslim painting between 1917 and 1947. Chughtai's secrecy and isolation elicited widespread acknowledgment that his school of painting had died with him.[156] Although the rise of modernism and abstraction after the founding of Pakistan, associated with the figures of Shakir Ali and Zubeida Agha, can also be seen in the rise of modernism in Urdu literature, the greater density of references and critical articles on Chughtai's work is due to his extended dialogue with poets and literary critics.[157] This experience was not

repeated by any subsequent artist. Chughtai's career thus also marks both the opening of possibilities for Urdu art criticism and their attenuation during subsequent decades and certainly demonstrates that, despite heroic scholarly efforts by the artist, Abdullah Chughtai, and other isolated researchers, so far no sustained and collective effort to study South Asian Muslim visual heritage has emerged from within Muslim South Asia.

Chughtai's repudiation of realism and his recourse to imaginative form were also significant. Western painters had to draw from live models, but oriental painting was free of such constraints. Although the West was tied to the worship of materialism and could not transcend realism, the East distinguished itself by use of the imagination and "transcended the limitations of a [live] model by grounding its 'model' purely on the basis of aesthetic principles."[158] The female figure, which had become a central motif in Chughtai's work, provided another point of departure between Iqbal and Chughtai. As the artist recounts, Iqbal, being a proponent of "art for life's sake," used to complain that in fine arts there appeared to be "no subject other than the female figure. [But] Tasir and myself would look at each other and softly remark that woman is indeed life's subject [*zindagi 'ibarat*]."[159] Iqbal situated nostalgia in a strategically fragmentary and activist framework and "generally considered Mughal civilizational achievements to be a sign of a culture in decline,"[160] but Chughtai found the very raison d'être of his art in Persian and Mughal painting and architecture and in the symbolic figure of the *ghazal*'s erotic beloved. Nevertheless, by the continued centrality of the female figure in his work and by his very refusal to paint triumphalist battle scenes or portraits of male authority, Chughtai resists Iqbal's masculinist vitalism. In this sense, the "difference" of Chughtai's illustrations in *'Amal-i Chughta'i* in picturizing Iqbal's poetry is significant.[161] Chughtai's orientalism, "in contrast to Iqbal's orientalism, possesses greater degrees of beauty and refinement [*latafat o jamal kay 'anasir*]. Rather than having masculine traits [*mardana ausaf*], it has a much greater sense of femininity [*nisa'iyat*]," observes Vahid Quraishi.[162] And although Chughtai is said to have "unabashedly objectified the bodies of women"[163] and is clearly not a feminist artist, his overall work nevertheless marks a crisis of masculinity that requires a reading sufficiently attentive to this dimension of his aesthetic.

Despite living through a turbulent period of South Asian history, Chughtai's paintings show virtually no overt thematic engagement with contemporary events.[164] He designed stamps and logos for the Pakistani state, but he does not mention them anywhere in his published writings.[165] Chughtai also triumphantly describes his return to "line and color" after overcoming an

early, all-encompassing fascination with photography, in effect repudiating the realist and indexical value of photography for his imaginative painterly universe.[166]

A late interview by Tasir published in 1952 provides further evidence of Chughtai's formalist aesthetic orientation. Tasir suggested that the primary purpose of art was to provide harmony and balance for emotions. Claiming that architecture, music, and painting possessed little space for "politics of the uniform" and that although literature might be inherently more suited to address the political than the other arts, literature itself was bigger than politics, encompassing the wider world, while political life was narrow and petty. Thus even when Chughtai ostensibly addressed themes that were potentially political, such as his Kashmir pictures and his painting *The Slave Girl*, Tasir nevertheless saw him maintaining "emotional balance" [*jazbati tavazun*] in these works.

Tasir was more open to modernism, suggesting that the world of art was transnational, a world in which a painter like Matisse could draw upon Persian carpets, for example. At this historical moment, for Tasir, Chughtai represented one possible approach to art, one that inherited the force of tradition to become a catalyst for new possibilities.[167] Chughtai refused to view himself in relation to Picasso, Gauguin, Braque, or van Gogh but sought to locate himself as a classical artist working in the tradition of the great Indo-Persian masters.[168] "From an artistic viewpoint, although my art has not yet attained the status of becoming classical, I am convinced that one day it will do so," he characteristically asserts, followed by what appears to be an opposing statement: "My art is as modern as the art of living nations."[169] This paradoxical formulation, of claiming classicism and modernity together, requires further explanation.

AN ANTIMODERNIST MODERNITY?

Chughtai's project was predicated upon the exploration and renewal of his own heritage, rather than upon any borrowing from Western modernism. If Chughtai is indeed a painter of the Ancien Régime—as much of criticism and his own self-perception seeks to situate him—what then is the possible relationship of Chughtai to modernism and modernity? This relationship is itself complex in its acknowledgments and silences. The immediate context is, of course, that Chughtai attempted to re-create Persian and Mughal classicism in an age of nationalism, capitalism, and decolonization, an age when addressee and patronage were in transition. The very effort to

re-create classicism is thus rendered as a nostalgic project, but this nostalgia was not without its positive effect, as Faiz recognized. Rather, Chughtai was far from passive, indeed he was a pioneer in his efforts to situate and shape patronage and audience along new lines. He was very intent on not simply publishing expensive, beautiful, and painstakingly made books but was very keen on issuing less expensive and more affordable editions, because he implicitly recognized the role of print culture as being essential to his artistic formation.[170] I have already discussed his efforts to produce illustrations and covers for books and journals, frequently in a voluntary capacity, without remuneration. Chughtai was also an artist of the "Age of Exhibitions"[171] and found patronage and audiences by winning awards with the resulting exposure in newspapers and magazine reviews.

Chughtai's subjectivity in his artwork is paradoxical—simultaneously central and absent. In his writings, Chughtai frequently stressed the individuality of the artist.[172] He was proud of creating what he considered to be a unique style, labeled "Chughtai Art" by him and by his critics.[173] The re-creation of a complete and static aesthetic universe led him inevitably to disavow stylistic change *within* his art. Agha Abdul Hamid has divided Chughtai's development into three periods, while Nesom, in her substantial and informative study, has identified five periods.[174] Nesom has also studied the signatures and dates on Chughtai's paintings and notes that around 1929 Chughtai ceased dating his work and, moreover, reworked themes from time to time to create similar paintings and also "occasionally reverted to previous styles." Even when he signed and dated his earlier work, the text is so tiny that it is "difficult to read in reproduction." Chughtai also released work for printing to journals and publications that he had done or developed much earlier. A striking example is the painting titled *Fame*, based in recognizably "Hindu" iconography and included in *ʿAmal-i Chughtaʾi* (Plate 2), a version of which had been published no less than fifty years earlier, in 1918.[175] Through such strategies, Chughtai successfully confounded a clear chronological account of his development, inhabiting the nostalgic plenitude of a Muslim visual past-into-present.[176] The presence of the "Hinduized" *Fame* in *ʿAmal-i Chughtaʾi*, a major late volume illustrating Iqbal's verses, also indicates that this Indo-Muslim past also ambivalently and uncertainly included aspects of South Asia's syncretistic culture, which was familiar to Chughtai but which became less so for subsequent generations of artists who came of age in Pakistan after 1947.

In works dealing with an ostensibly modern subject, such as *College Girls* (Figure 1.16), Chughtai begins to recast the figures in a decorative schema composed of rectangles and curves and marked by rhythm and symmetry of

FIGURE 1.16. *Abdur Rahman Chughtai,* College Girls, *1954. Watercolor on paper. Dimensions n.a. (Courtesy United Nations Art Collection, New York. Reproduced with permission of Arif Rahman Chughtai, © Chughtai Museum Trust, Lahore.)*

the two figures, which brings the work closer to modernist considerations of balance of form. Yet Chughtai does not further pursue this analysis of pictorial space into its constituent abstract or geometric elements. Chughtai was well aware of modernist currents in Urdu literature—he designed the cover of N. M. Rashid's first collection of poetry, *Mavara* (ca. 1940), which introduced free verse in Urdu poetry, for example (Figure 1.13).[177] Chughtai's avoidance of modernism in his paintings might also have been motivated by his awareness of his singular status. Unlike the literary modernists who worked in association with various literary circles, during the first three decades of his career (1917–47) Chughtai remained a towering, solitary figure upholding and modernizing aspects of visual "tradition." His work above all was suffused with a self-conscious optimism [*raja'iyat*] addressing South Asian Muslim subjectivity, which was traversing a difficult decolonizing process while simultaneously being rendered a minority.

Chughtai's modernity lies in his providing the South Asian Muslim intelligentsia with the practice of visual art as a serious endeavor, to which Chughtai devoted himself with a single-minded focus over a career spanning six decades. By his interpellation of himself as an artist rather than as an artisan, he firmly established artistic subjectivity and imagination in Muslim South Asia as a central motif in artistic development. By the very singularity and massive scope of his achievements and by his exhaustion of the possibilities of "Chughtai Art," he enabled the younger modernists to repudiate his nostalgic and enchanted world and initiate a new openness toward transnational modernism. Chughtai's association with the Indo-Muslim literary universe also attempted to secure painting on a discursive and textual basis. Artists who emerged after the partition of colonial India into the postcolonial states of India and Pakistan in 1947 continued this move, seeking a relation between literary and painterly modernism in the cafés of Lahore. The search for an adequate ground for artistic practice has persisted until today, stimulating artists to continued praxis and offering them a considerable degree of freedom to inhabit new formalist, modernist, and conceptual developments.

CHAPTER 2 MID-CENTURY MODERNISM

ZAINUL ABEDIN, ZUBEIDA AGHA, AND SHAKIR ALI

Modernism arrived suddenly in Pakistani art, immediately after the country's formation. The bloodshed and turmoil of partition, the unsettled condition of large numbers of refugees, and the absence of institutions in the underdeveloped regions that became Pakistan, all contributed to upheaval and trauma. The founding of a new nation-state with an uncertain cultural patrimony and future meant that inherited cultural forms also experienced crisis and drawn-out shocks, whose result was to allow modernist artistic forms to become established.

In 1947, along with numerous other institutional deficiencies, the fine arts also inherited a difficult landscape in Pakistan. Even Lahore, which had possessed the best-developed infrastructure—including two schools for art instruction, the Mayo School of Art (now the National College of Art) and the Department of Fine Arts at Punjab University—was in poor shape. Most of the art instructors and students from Lahore had migrated to India, leaving these institutions severely depleted. It was reported, for example, that at the Department of Fine Arts at Punjab University, enrollment went from some 260 to only 6 students during 1947.[1] Abdur Rahman Chughtai continued his practice of art in Lahore, but due to his withdrawal from public contact and his distance from the Mayo School, he remained a singular figure rather than one influencing the course of art in the new nation-state. Many other artists, such as Bhabesh Chandra Sanyal and Satish Gujral, had departed for India. The city of Karachi, which was rapidly attracting a very large number of refugees from India, was reported to have had virtually no art scene before 1947.[2] In underdeveloped East Pakistan, there was not a single art school, not even in Dhaka—the few artists who resided in East Bengal or who moved there in the wake of Pakistan's creation had been trained at the Calcutta School of Art. But, during the two decades following independence in 1947, a number of key institutional developments supporting modern art were consolidated. These included the establishment and upgrading of art schools, the founding of artistic societies and exhibition venues, and an increasing focus on modern art by English-language publications.

Colonial authorities had founded the Mayo School of Art in the late nineteenth century in Lahore, focusing on crafts and industrial arts training, but painting had also been taught there. It was upgraded to become the National College of Art in 1958. During Shakir Ali's tenure there—as an instructor in painting from 1952 and as principal from 1961 until 1969—the National College of Art became the most important incubator of modernism in West Pakistan. At Punjab University, the artist Anna Molka Ahmed headed the Department of Fine Arts for many years, organizing shows and publishing a pioneering series of exhibition catalogs during the 1950s. In Dhaka, in East Pakistan, Zainul Abedin founded the Government Institute of Arts in 1949, which quickly developed into a highly influential training site for artists there. Publications—primarily in English—expanded the audience for and influence of modern art, at least in the upper-class and middle-class urbanized groups, to the degree that by 1965, a critic noted, the "Westernized elite of Pakistan [was taking] its modern art seriously."[3] These publications included the survey text by Jalal Uddin Ahmed, *Art in Pakistan*, which was issued in four editions between 1954 and 1972. A number of English-language magazines, such as *Pakistan Quarterly*, which began in 1949, prominently showcased modern Pakistani art. In addition, a number of short-lived English-language magazines devoted to the arts were started between 1959 and 1971.[4] Artistic societies and councils were founded in Karachi, Dhaka, and Lahore beginning in the 1950s. Notable institutions include the Karachi Arts Council, which built an important exhibition venue in 1960; the Alhamra in Lahore; and the Gallery of Contemporary Art in Rawalpindi, which Zubeida Agha headed for sixteen years, beginning in 1961.[5]

During its early years, Pakistan also faced numerous structural difficulties in the realm of political economy. These included the lack of industrial infrastructure; financial crises; the settlement of millions of refugees; the lack of a continuity of good leadership caused by the early death of Pakistan's founder, Mohammad Ali Jinnah; and the difficulty caused by the geographical division of the country into two wings with the presence in between of the much stronger and hostile India. A type of internal colonialism by the Western wing's military-bureaucratic-industrial elite (the "establishment") over the Eastern wing exacerbated these problems, which led to increasing polarization between East Pakistan and West Pakistan. This domination was perceived by the Eastern wing to be as much cultural and representational as it was economic and political.[6] Unlike post-1947 India, where Nehruvian socialism oriented itself toward national developmentalism and toward a nonaligned foreign policy (albeit with links to the Soviet Union), the Paki-

stani establishment quickly moved to align the country with the United States.

From the early 1950s onward, Pakistan had become a veritable Cold War proxy for the United States.[7] Pro–United States foreign policies in Pakistan were accompanied by domestic repression of leftist intellectuals and activists, including the persecution of members of the All Pakistan Progressive Writers Association in Lahore and Karachi, which included some of the most prominent intellectuals and writers in the country. "Thanks to the grace of Allah, the new country is free from such curses as poetry, music and dance. . . . It is also free from revolutionaries and all subversive elements who led the people astray. . . . There are no painters left, and those few who are left had to sacrifice their fingers to prevent them from engaging in infidelity. . . . The completely senseless, so-called realistic literature has been abolished, literary journals are no longer published," author Saadat Hasan Manto noted sarcastically as early as 1950.[8] But worse was to follow. The Rawalpindi Conspiracy Case of 1951 is an important landmark, in which members of the Communist Party of Pakistan were tried for conspiring to overthrow the government. As a consequence, the most prominent Urdu poet of his generation, Faiz Ahmad Faiz, was jailed for four years between 1951 and 1955.[9] The All Pakistan Progressive Writers Association and the Communist Party of Pakistan were also banned in 1954. These events had a highly repressive effect on expression[10] and, according to historian Ayesha Jalal, were crucial in Pakistan's eventual transformation into "a veritable intellectual wasteland." Significantly, Jalal reports that the police perceived a greater threat from the Progressive Writers Association than from labor groups, indicating that "culture" was not merely epiphenomenal, lending support to Saadia Toor's Gramscian argument regarding the key role cultural debates have played during periods of national crisis in Pakistan.[11] A persistent series of crisis of governance, shot through with increasing instability and authoritarianism between 1951 and 1958, were finally "overcome" by Field Marshal Ayub Khan's coup in 1958. After seizing power, Ayub Khan further centralized and exerted greater control over journalism, criticism, and cultural policies, including his notorious takeover of Progressive Papers Limited, the publishers of *Pakistan Times*, the largest-circulation English-language daily, and *Imroze*, an important Urdu newspaper, in 1959. In sum, throughout the late 1940s and well into the late 1950s, members of the leftist intelligentsia were persecuted, driven underground, or co-opted by the state through ideological interpellation and patronage.

These national crises contributed to the forces animating modern art. The movement of Pakistan in the U.S. orbit during the 1950s and 1960s meant

that Pakistan was a focus of American cultural diplomacy in the context of the Cold War, which included promotion of exhibitions by American embassies and consulate offices and visits by American artists to Pakistan.[12] As Serge Guilbaut and others have shown for other regions, abstraction, existential anguish, and personal vision in painting were valorized by Cold War American policy against realism.[13] In the United States itself, between the late 1930s and the 1950s, the critic Clement Greenberg had famously moved toward what T. J. Clark has termed an "Eliotic Trotskyism," emphasizing an elegiac autonomy of the modernist tradition, flatness, and other formal optical qualities of the picture plane.[14]

Disavowal of realism and of radicalism of content is not limited to the case of Pakistan and should not be simply ascribed to political and ideological repression. One also needs to attend to the artists' productive embrace of modernism, which arguably shaped subjectivities in a more complex fashion than was possible through the social realist "progressivism" of the 1930s. In this regard, the Progressive Artists' Group (PAG) in Bombay, founded in 1947, the year of Indian independence and the partition of colonial India into India and Pakistan, affords an important comparison. It was primarily the PAG, in the late 1940s—which included Maqbool Fida Husain, Francis Newton Souza, Tyeb Mehta, and others—that fully embraced modernism in India, although the earlier work of pioneer artist Amrita Sher-Gil in the 1930s was certainly influential for them.[15] Well before the founding of the PAG, the notion of the "progressive" was already in play, from the mid-1930s with the founding of the Progressive Writers Association.[16] This association had rapidly emerged as a highly influential group of writers producing literature of social realism and critique across India in numerous languages. Muslim authors writing in Urdu played a leading role.[17] Although progressive currents in writing and theater from the late 1930s and early 1940s influenced the Bombay PAG, the PAG is characterized above all by its engagement with transnational modernism rather than with concern for programmatic social consciousness. The Bombay PAG's use of the concept of "progressive" was belated, coming a full decade after the founding of the Progressive Writers Association and well after the defeat of European fascism and coinciding with the national independence of India—events that had greatly altered the sociopolitical horizon. As such, the appeal of realism for the post-1947 era had already been greatly attenuated. Moreover, as art historian Chaitanya Sambrani notes, the majority of the six members of the PAG were Muslim or Christian artists, or from otherwise disadvantaged groups: "Their social and economic backgrounds lend a special gravity in their bid for this universalized modernism in the

context of the newly-independent, secular socialist republic with emancipation, egalitarianism and modernization on its policy agenda."[18] Thus, during the first PAG exhibition in 1948, only a year after the founding of the group, Francis Newton Souza forcefully repudiated the very notion of "progressive" itself, claiming, "I do not quite understand now, why we still call our Group 'progressive.' . . . We have changed all the chauvinist and leftist fanaticism which we incorporated in our manifesto at the inception of the Group. . . . The gulf between the so-called 'people' and the artist cannot be bridged. . . . Today we paint with absolute freedom for contents and techniques." Sambrani has argued that this disavowal of the national and the social and the full embrace of formalist possibilities of transnational modernism "was of crucial importance in order to internalize the consequences of European high modernism."[19] With the achievement of national independence, elements of the cultural intelligentsia expected the nation-state to assume responsibility for *political* representation of the people, freeing the artist from the task of their *artistic* representation. Nevertheless, as Sambrani further notes, some modernists did represent the marginalized and the exploited in the national-modern, although he notes that formalist and individual stylistic considerations overrode any sense of "oppositional intervention," producing only a "tamed, palatable modernism."[20]

Despite Sambrani's pessimistic assessment of the failure of the PAG to develop a socially relevant artistic praxis, I suggest that PAG's modernism precisely addresses the quandaries of new nationhood that required the positing of aesthetic alternatives beyond direct social address. The predominantly minority status of PAG members meant that a singular national horizon could not be easily embraced. Rather than seeing this as a limitation, one might view this move as a critical refusal to easily inhabit the national itself and indeed as an opening up of the self and nation to a wider dialogue with universalist aspirations of equality and freedom, which the decolonization process had engendered.[21] The PAG held their first exhibition in 1948, after the partition of colonial India and, as a result, did not directly influence the development of modernism in Pakistan (although figures like Shakir Ali were participants in the Bombay art scene until the mid-1940s). Nevertheless, artistic modernism at mid-century in South Asia enacts comparable subjectivities in both India and Pakistan, despite their divergent political trajectories.

In the case of Pakistani modernists, there are additional complications, however. The more overt repression of the leftist intelligentsia in Pakistan and an attenuated sense of the national in Pakistan lent further impetus to artists in embracing transnational modernism. Moreover, as I have argued

earlier, formalism is itself more amenable to Indo-Persian aesthetics than is academic realism.[22] In this sense, rather than simply disavowing a social referent due to state repression alone, the development of modernism in Pakistan should be understood *productively* as exploring aesthetic and subjective possibilities not accessible by realist modes. The move toward formalism and abstraction is necessitated not simply by avoidance of ideological exigencies and manipulation but as a *positivity* that artists enacted to explore personal and social predicaments of modernity, in parallel with their counterparts in India and in many other locations around the world. Clearly, the underdeveloped character of Pakistani nationhood and the weakness of art historical canonicity and scholarship provided a space for artistic practice that was itself tentative and processual, yet also less burdened with the task of directly representing the empirical and the social. The embrace of modernism was made easier by the fact that academic artistic training was lacking in the first place and by turning away from the more rigid ideological stance many progressive writers had adopted by 1940.

Pioneering figures of artistic modernism in Pakistan, including Shakir Ali, Zainul Abedin, and Ali Imam (1924–2002), were affiliated with leftist and communist causes during the 1940s.[23] Artists migrated toward modernism in the subsequent decades and also worked to establish institutions for pedagogy and exhibition after independence in 1947. Shakir Ali became associated with the National College of Art and exerted the most significant pedagogic influence over the emergence of modernist painting in West Pakistan. Zainul Abedin established an influential art institute in East Pakistan and played an equally significant role in training the next generation of artists there. After being jailed for leftist activism, artist Ali Imam (younger brother of noted Indian artist Sayed Haider Raza) taught in Karachi for several years before founding the Indus Gallery, which functioned for many years as the most important exhibition space in the city.[24] Zubeida Agha—not associated earlier with leftist and socialist causes—became head of the Rawalpindi Art Gallery for sixteen years, working there with great dedication and organizing important solo and group shows of modern art. These figures exerted their considerable energies in establishing institutions, to such a degree that their own work was considerably slowed or suffered due to the heavy administrative responsibilities. They had to begin largely from scratch in order to create spheres of training and exhibition spaces for modern art. This effort points toward its corresponding social and discursive lack, but also its necessity in rendering modernism itself legible. It is worth noting that despite political tensions there was lively exchange in the art world between the East and the

West wings, with numerous exhibitions and artists traveling back and forth frequently.

The West Pakistani artists thus began their artistic practice as a tabula rasa, without a defining nationalist rhetoric and without an a priori critical ground. In Zubeida Agha's and Shakir Ali's cases, this modernism is constructed precisely upon evasions and silences (artists did not seek another discursive ground until the rise of calligraphy in the later 1960s, as examined in chapter 3). The East Pakistan situation was very different, and although this book focuses on artists primarily from West Pakistan, a comparison with Zainul Abedin's practice provides for a useful understanding of the similarities and differences in the emergence of modernism proper after 1947. Due to East Pakistan's marginalized status, the practice of Zainul Abedin turned away from addressing the Pakistani nation and instead explored the East Bengal locale, remaining formally divided between modernism and depictions of the folk and the tribal subalterns.

ZAINUL ABEDIN

Zainul Abedin was one of the best-known artists at the birth of Pakistan. He was already well recognized in Calcutta before 1947 and is regarded as the founding figure of modern Bangladeshi art. His national status is complex and divided—Indian, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi.[25] Born into a poor family in Kishorganj (now in Bangladesh) in 1914, he studied painting at the Government School of Art in Calcutta from 1933 to 1938 and then taught there until 1947. His work first attracted public attention in 1943, when he produced a powerful series of drawings of the Bengal Famine of 1943 (Figure 2.1). After the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947, he worked for the Information and Publications Division of Pakistan and also became founder and principal of the public Institute of Fine Arts in Dhaka. Founded in 1949, the Institute of Fine Arts was soon perceived as the best art school in Pakistan's early years.[26] Abedin proved to be a motivating figure, leading by the example of his own art, and was respected for his excellent administrative skills.[27] Other artists from East Pakistan active during the 1950s and 1960s included S. M. Sultan (1923–94), Hamidur Rahman (1928–88), Mohammad Kibria (born 1929), Aminul Islam (born 1931), and Novera Ahmed (born 1939).

Zainul Abedin's stature as an artist and his position as a senior bureaucrat provided him with a number of opportunities to travel abroad throughout the 1950s and 1960s. His first important extended trip, during 1951–52, arranged by the government of Pakistan, was to England and other parts of Europe. He

FIGURE 2.1. *Zainul Abedin,* Famine Sketch, *1943. Ink on paper. 41 × 58 cm. (Courtesy Mainul Abedin.)*

also managed to attend a UNESCO conference on art in Venice. This journey was formative, leading him to create his Bengali modernist paintings. The Rockefeller Foundation sponsored a second extended trip in 1956–57, which included visits to Mexico and Japan as well as North America, and he held an exhibition at the Smithsonian in 1957. He also visited the Soviet Union in 1961 at the invitation of the Soviets, who awarded him a gold medal. These visits were typical of the landscape of decolonization during the 1950s and 1960s in the context of the cultural Cold War. Abedin's journeys to the United States and the Soviet Union—and the aspirations newly independent nations vested in internationalist bodies such as UNESCO—are a revealing testimony to the intricacies of cultural politics during that period.

Abedin's works from the early 1950s are the most modernist of his career. Later, he continued to return to the formalist and modernist works of the early 1950s, but he also "reverted" to a "realist" language that characterized his earlier work from the 1940s. His practice between the 1940s and 1970 thus veered among "realist" depictions of events in Bengal, modernist decorative recodings of the folk, and institutional responsibilities. His consistent advocacy of folk art and rural life continued uninterrupted throughout his career.[28]

Domestic and international developments during the late 1960s yet again politicized Abedin's practice. On the invitation of the Arab League, he met with and created a series of sketches of Palestinian guerrillas and refugees in 1970. That year, he also organized the Nabanna (rice harvest) Exhibition on the theme of rural Bengal. His artistic contribution consisted of a painted sixty-five-foot-long scroll, depicting rural life in Bengal before and after the advent of colonialism, in vignettes that recall his earlier Bengal Famine series (Figure 2.2). The scroll invited participation by the audience, "who were encouraged by the artist himself to put their signatures on the scroll,"[29] interpellating them into the rural history of East Bengal during a period of intense mobilization against West Pakistani repression. He also created a thirty-foot scroll showing the effects of the devastating cyclone of 1970 that hit East Pakistan (the lack of relief help on the part of the Pakistani government further inflamed resentment against West Pakistani domination). The heaps of dead bodies depicted, along with Abedin's pithy comment, "We Bengalis unite only in death," repeated the question of the individual in relation to society during crisis, which he had explored earlier in his Bengal Famine series of 1943. In early 1971, Abedin participated in a popular rally organized by peasant activist Maulana Bhashani, in which he renounced honors bestowed on him by the Pakistani government, and in March 1971 he led a demonstration by the Artists' Revolutionary Council, which publicly affirmed the cause of Bangladeshi national independence.

Abedin's leadership in creating institutions and spearheading the development of a professional sphere of modern art in the underdeveloped region of East Bengal/East Pakistan was an important part of his work. As S. M. Islam noted, from possessing virtually no infrastructure in 1947, "our artists had generated, what amounted to, a movement. Art schools, art galleries, an art loving public, art critics and a supportive media—all found their designated places or roles in that movement."[30] Abedin's interest in institution building continued after the independence of Bangladesh, and in 1975, only a year before his death, he managed to open two museums, the Sonargaon Folk Art Museum and the Zainul Museum in Mymensingh, both the culmination of earlier efforts.[31]

Three interrelated themes in Abedin's oeuvre provide important insights into his work: the relationship between his "realist" and his modernist works, his valorization of the rural and the folk, and the question of the nation. "Realism" in his work refers here to the depiction of narrative and social evidence, rather than to academic realism, whereas his "modernist" works gesture toward formalist balance, recasting figures into a schema of color

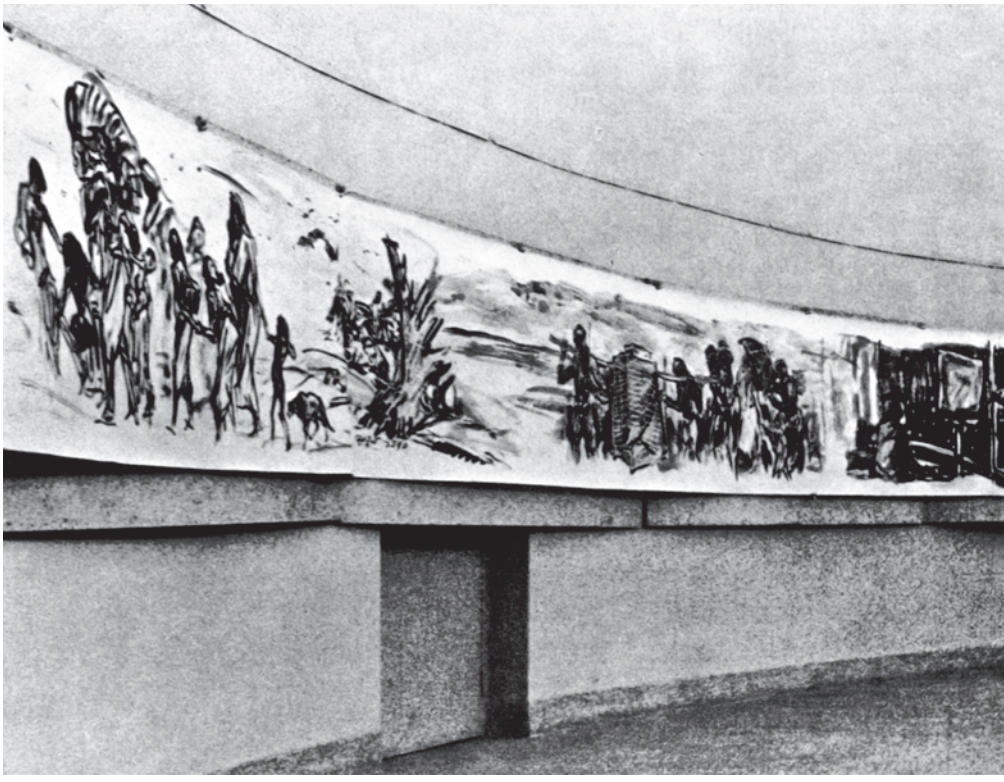
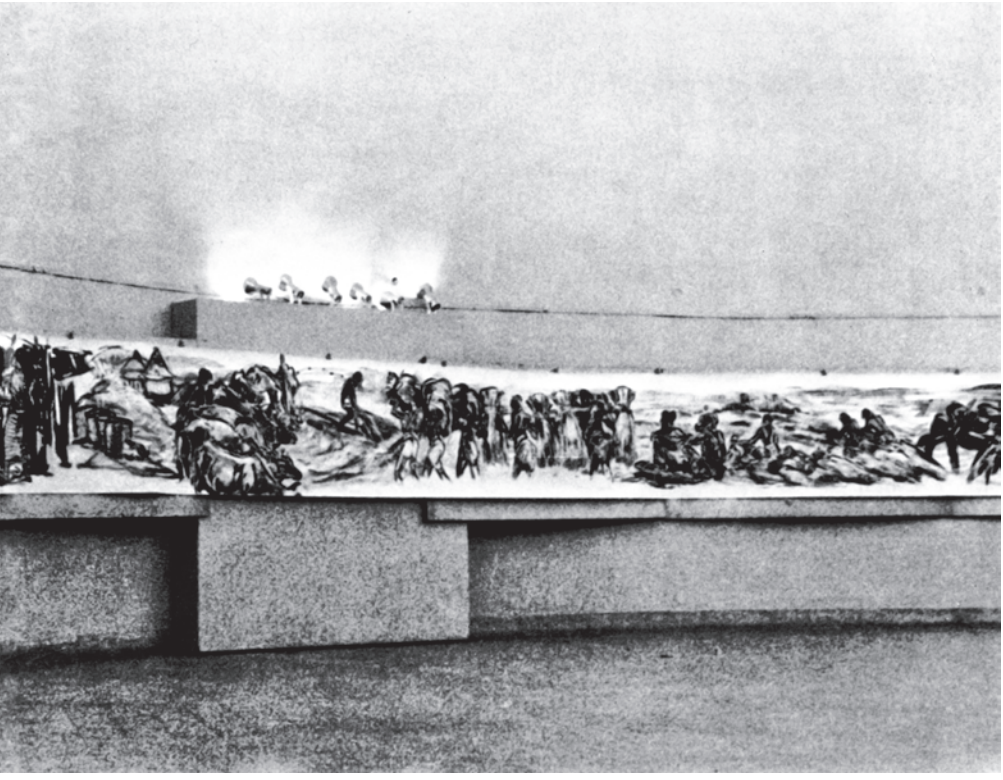


FIGURE 2.2. *Zainul Abedin,* Life in Bangladesh*, 1970. Wax, black ink, and watercolor on paper. 1.2 × 19.8 m. Exhibited at the "Nabanna" Group Exhibition. (Courtesy Mainul Abedin.)*

and form. His first important works, the Bengal Famine sketches from 1943, are realist ink sketches made with a brush and influenced by Japanese painting and calligraphy.[32] Critic Sanjoy Mallik points out the interrelationship of individual sketches as a series by the artist depicting small and atomized groups of victims of starvation in Calcutta at the center of each composition. "By isolating figure by figure, Zainul built up an iconography of the Famine — of the family that gradually lost its cohesion, scattered in the huge city and claimed by death."[33] Along with works by the artist Chittaprasad, these were exhibited by the Communist Party in 1943 and reproduced in the Communist Party newspaper in Calcutta, *The People's War*, in 1945, bringing the artist some prominence. Some of these sketches were reproduced in a book on the Famine, *Darkening Days* (1944), which British colonial authorities found sufficiently subversive to restrict distribution (Figure 2.3).[34]

Abedin also became more deeply immersed in the discovery of the "folk," a topic that had assumed a major role in Calcutta since the 1920s, especially



in the works of Jamini Roy, who had drawn from the themes, materials, and production arrangements of the Bengali folk painting tradition. Partha Mitter has argued that primitivist modernism in Indian art, primarily between the 1920s and 1940s, formed part of a deeper global modality that also informs the work of abstract painters such as Piet Mondrian, Kasimir Malevich, and Wassily Kandinsky via their exposure to Indian philosophies and such spiritual movements as Theosophy.[35] Indian artists in turn recognized the critical potential of primitivism in fashioning an alternative to the "teleological certainty of modernity."[36] Mitter contrasts the celebration of the freedom and spontaneity of folk and tribal India in much of this work with the striking absence of the urban motif in Indian art from this period.

In this manner, primitivism, which provided an oblique critique of British colonialism, must also be situated in a complex relationship to Gandhi's valorization of rural and peasant India. Mitter suggests that primitivism was "replete with ambiguities and contradictions," which is precisely what allowed

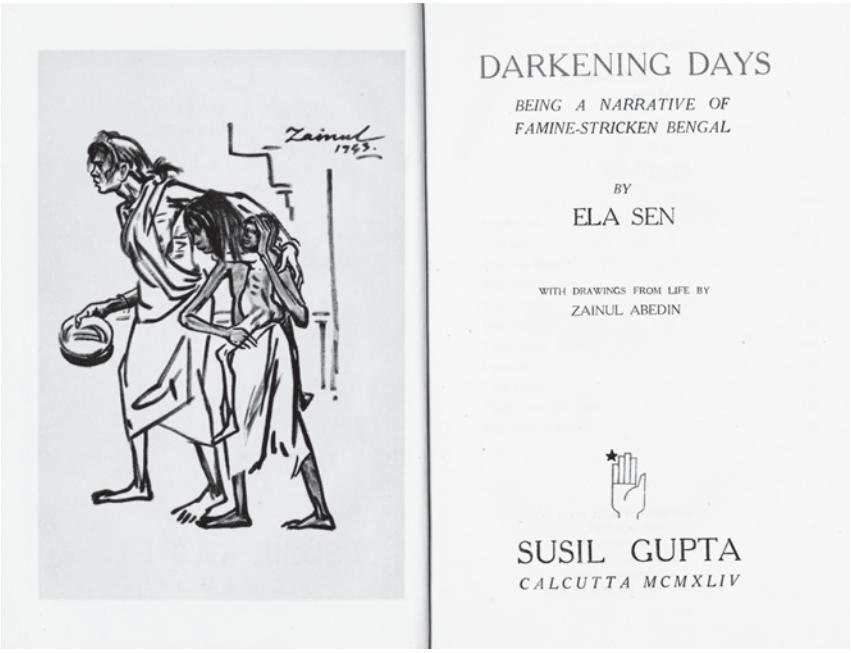


FIGURE 2.3. *Zainul Abedin, frontispiece of Ela Sen,* Darkening Days, Being a Narrative of Famine-Stricken Bengal*, with drawings by Zainul Abedin, 1944. Dimensions n.a. (Courtesy Mainul Abedin.)*

Indian painters and sculptors to recode it during the 1920s and 1930s as a trope of freedom.[37] Artists based in Calcutta and associated with Rabindranath Tagore's university at Santiniketan had developed a strong interest in rural themes and forms, especially in relation to the Santhal tribes of Bengal, whose "innate aesthetic sense"[38] was seen as having remained intact despite colonial depredations. The Santhals had assumed a central importance in the works of major artists such as Benodebehari Mukhopadhyaya, Nandalal Bose, and Ramkinker Baij during the 1930s and 1940s.[39]

Zainul Abedin had also sketched the Santhal tribes during his time in Calcutta, and he continued his fascination with them in Dhaka in the early 1950s. For Abedin, the "national" inheres in the rural landscape of East Bengal and in primitivist identification with the Santhal tribes (Plate 5, Figure 2.4). But he also began a series of modernist works. Executed in oil and drawing on the formal languages of artists such as Cezanne, Matisse, Modigliani, and Jamini Roy,[40] Abedin's works recast his fascination with rural and tribal Bengal into ornamental schemas. His modernist *Santhal Maidens* (ca. 1950), executed in oil, with its decorative rhythms that align ethnic primitivism and otherness

FIGURE 2.4. *Zainul Abedin,* Two Santhal Women, *1951. Watercolor on paper. 73.7 × 58.5 cm. (Courtesy Mainul Abedin.)*

with nature, invites comparison with the works of the likes of Gauguin and Matisse and other Bengali primitivist artists. The strong contoured brown limbs of the maidens, the placement of flowers in their hair, and the rhythmic repetition of their figures evoke formal and colorist parallels with the branches and foliage behind them (Plate 5). This primitivism turns on yet another complexity, in that the Bengali people had been viewed by colonial discourse as feminized, and connotations of the soft, artistic Bengali inhabiting

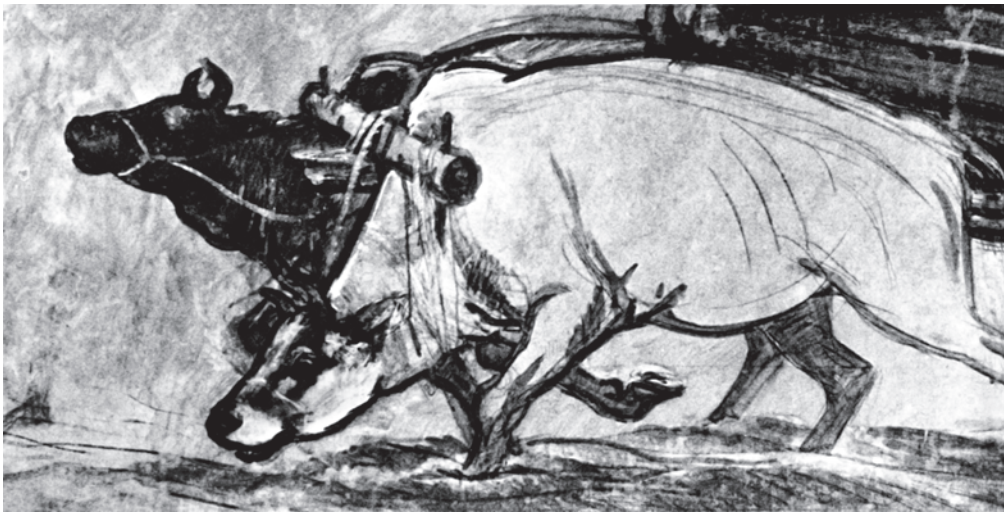


FIGURE 2.5. *Zainul Abedin,* The Struggle, *1959. Oil and tempera on masonite board. 155 × 627 cm. (Courtesy Mainul Abedin.)*

a lush landscape carried over to West Pakistani imaginings of East Pakistan.[41] Moreover, the association of the Punjabi and the Pathan as the "martial races" from colonial typology also continued after independence as internalized and naturalized discourse.[42]

Upon his return from his extended trip to Europe during 1951–52, Abedin became deeply conscious of the need to develop a local modernism and "started to speak in very strong terms in favour of a Bengali-Modernism in painting." He created a series of his most important modernist works in 1953, which delineate the full extent of his engagement with modernism for the remainder of his career. In *Women Dressing Hair* (1953), the female figures no longer offer an evidentiary account of specific tribals or of peasant labor but form a composition of sweeping curves and geometries and blocks of cross-hatched color (Plate 6). At the same time, he became even more committed to mapping the folk traditions of East Bengal.[43] From the early 1950s on, Abedin thus developed a divided practice, which reveals the curious, almost schizophrenic modality of working simultaneously in representational registers—gestural watercolor sketches of architectural motifs, street scenes, the Bengali landscape, rural labor (Figure 2.5), and tribals—along with his oil-based formalist modernist works. What unites these two is the choice of the subject, the abiding concern for the local, the rural, and the folk.[44] In keeping with the legacy of Indian primitivist modernism, standard motifs of modernity such as cityscapes, railways, and portraits of urban life are strikingly

absent, even when he was keenly interested in modern architecture, as evidenced by his close involvement with a renowned East Pakistani architect in the planning and construction of the modern campus of his Institute of Fine Arts in 1956.[45] His disregard for the *thematics* of modernity and his preference for the folk require elucidation.

The photograph of Zainul Abedin in his office at the Institute of Fine Arts surrounded by folk toys from Bengal (Figure 2.6) stages his personal and pedagogical imperative to recode the region, which was characterized by underdevelopment and difference from the dominating and industrializing Western wing. In addition to the dramatic and visible crises of famines and cyclones, East Bengal, in comparison with the more urban and developed areas of West Bengal, had remained largely rural and underdeveloped. With the creation of Pakistan, a grossly unequal relationship between the Western and the Eastern wings was established early on and included not only economic and social dispossession but also the imposition of Urdu and other West Pakistani cultural norms on East Pakistan.[46] "The equation between Pakistan, Islam, Urdu and the cultural traditions of Mughal India had the most devastating impact on national unity," notes historian Ayesha Jalal.[47]

Zainul Abedin's consistent focus on the folk, the rural, and the tribal thus references an East Bengali regional site rather than addressing the Pakistani national space. Under Abedin's guidance, "folk elements penetrated deeper into the artistic psyche, and the fifties canvas began to show different varia-

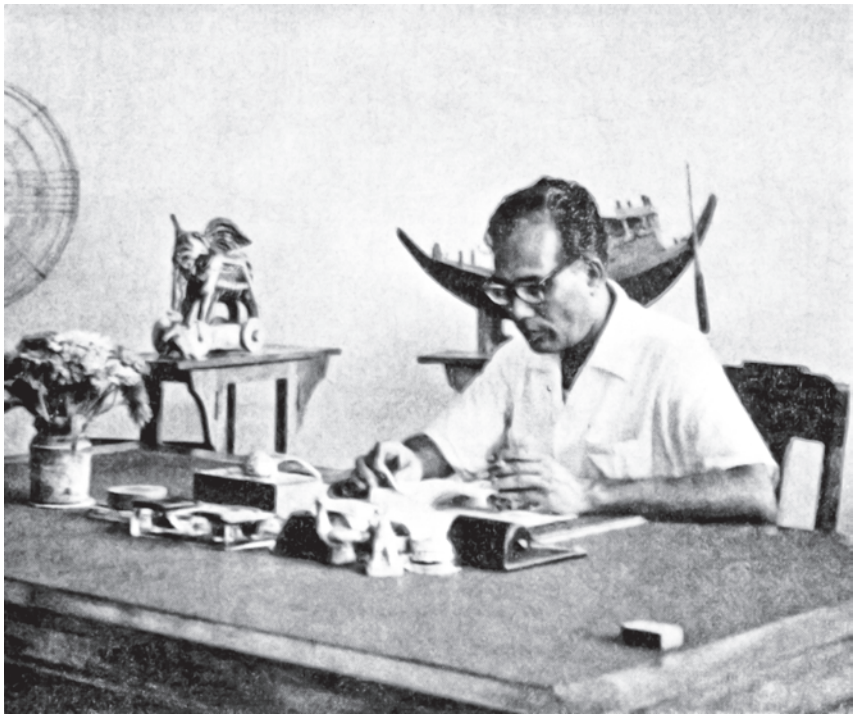


FIGURE 2.6. *Zainul Abedin in his office at the Dacca Art Institute. (Courtesy Mainul Abedin.)*

tions of the pastoral landscape, subsuming in the process, elements of disquiet and distrust," observes Syed Manzooral Islam, regarding the general direction of East Pakistani painting in the 1950s.[48] If Indian primitivism before 1947 afforded an oblique critique of colonial developmentalism, as Mitter has argued, Abedin's choice of motifs continues this pointed bypassing of modernization, protesting the continued underdevelopment and cultural marginalization of East Pakistan throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Here the idea of a "Bengali difference" as an aesthetic separate from the development of art in the Western wing was perceptive. According to Naqvi, a common West Pakistani perception maintained that "the Bengali artists were born with artistic taste, while we in the West [wing] had to acquire it through hard work."[49] This difference amplified the unequal relationship festering between the country's two wings.

Abedin's institutional position was paradoxical, as was, arguably, his personal situation. East Pakistani artists were featured in prominent reports and publications from West Pakistan. Dhaka was the site of numerous national exhibitions, and Zainul Abedin played the role of an influential adviser and

FIGURE 2.7. *Zainul Abedin,* Way to Quaid's Grave, *1948. Ink on paper. Dimensions n.a. (Courtesy Mainul Abedin.)*

bureaucrat, being called on to perform various tasks by the Pakistani government. These included a seven-month stay in Peshawar to organize the Department of Fine Arts at the University of Peshawar in 1965, where an annual prize in the artist's name is still awarded.[50] His sketch from 1948 of the visit to the grave of Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan, who had recently died, is one of the very few works by an important Pakistani painter on a national theme, but even here, the depiction is of common folk on the makeshift and improvised landscape of the road to Jinnah's grave, rather than of an official ceremony (Figure 2.7).

The national prominence accorded to Zainul Abedin and other East Pakistani artists overcompensated in the cultural realm for actual economic and political inequalities that persisted and increasingly alienated large sections of the East Pakistani populace from Pakistani nationhood. In a short survey of Pakistani culture from 1965, historian Aziz Ahmad perceptively noted the hollowness of this strategy:

> Most baffling was the problem of balanced emphasis and "cultural parity" between East and West Pakistan. The almost equal distribution of cultural

> emphasis was partly a sop to the sensitivities of East Pakistani intellectuals, and partly a genuine effort to cultural interpenetration. Yet, in terms of objective value-creation or determination of standards this resulted in curious situations. Nazrul Islam, the great revolutionary Bengali poet, though mentally ill and resident by choice in Indian West Bengal[,] had to be equated institutionally with the much greater poet philosopher Sir Muhammad Iqbal, the theoretician of Pakistan's creation. Zainul Abedin, a promising Bengali representational painter[,] received parity of official attention and patronage with the incomparable Abdur Rahman Chughtai.[51]

The pejorative remark on "objective value-creation" notwithstanding, Aziz Ahmad nevertheless opens up the important question of the role of "high" forms in the official constitution of Pakistani culture. Although the Bengali intelligentsia since the nineteenth century has produced some of the most compelling cultural artifacts in modern South Asia, the participation of Muslims was glaringly absent in this Calcutta-based efflorescence. Since the nineteenth century, in stark comparison with the cosmopolitan and sophisticated urban center of Calcutta in West Bengal, East Bengal and its urban life were greatly underdeveloped and continued to remain so after the creation of Pakistan in 1947. East Bengal had largely played the role of a feudal hinterland, whose surplus was not retained by the local elite but was instead moved toward London and Calcutta before 1947 and toward West Pakistan afterward. And since the existing Bengali high culture was seen as Hindu and was thus disapproved of by Pakistani ideologues, Abedin adopted the formal and thematic concerns of Calcutta and Santiniketan artists with primitivism, but he turned them toward a new recoding of the rural and the folk in the East Bengal locale.

"The folk," of course, cannot be apprehended without framing and representation. One thus sees Abedin mounting sustained and heroic efforts to bring artisanal objects and practices to light. For instance, Abedin organized expeditions with students and teachers to meet artisans practicing their crafts, in an attempt to inculcate modalities as part of legitimate artistic practice.[52] His student, the artist Mansur Rahi, recalls that the living room of Zainul Abedin's home was itself a veritable folk museum of the arts of East Bengal.[53] Badruddin Jahangir has noted that rather than painting "pictures of Muslim glory" like Chughtai,[54] Abedin painted rural peasants and bulls emerging as laboring bodies, as heroic figures who are frequently engaged in struggle. Abedin's primitivism in his realist works is radical and critical, Jahangir has argued, rather than nostalgic and oriented toward the past. If

the social body of the nation enacts itself in empty calendrical time, "marked not by prefiguring and fulfillment, but by temporal coincidence," as Benedict Anderson has argued,[55] Abedin's primitivism suggests that this temporality itself is not homogeneous across national space but is differentiated and that it robs East Pakistan of its present. Pointing out that, in the discipline of anthropology, "Physical Time is seldom used in its naked, chronological form," Johannes Fabian identifies a series of "distancing devices" such as primitivism, which create a "*denial of coevalness . . . a persistent and systematic tendency to place the referent(s) of anthropology in a Time other than the present of the producer of anthropological discourse*."[56] Remarkably, here it is not an outsider denying the coevalness of East Pakistan but the artist himself. But, unlike the anthropological maneuver that can imagine no future for the primitive, and also contrary to Benedict Anderson's assertion, Abedin indeed offers a glimpse of "prefiguring and fulfillment." For Abedin, the present, having been colonized by the British and by official Pakistani ideology, did not exist as a sustainable reality. "From the backwardness of a peasant society he looked towards the future. . . . The present, he wanted to say[,] was crisis-ridden. That is why Bengali society had only a past and a future," observes Jahangir.[57] Accordingly, the absence of motifs of modernity in Abedin's art signals his refusal of unequal developmentalism. The artist's work resisted West Pakistani state domination by developing a regional and subnational aesthetic with its struggling peasants, rural crafts, and Santhal tribals.

Unlike modern painting in India, West Pakistani painting possesses no "ancient mythopoetic or iconographic anchorsheet," Aziz Ahmad lamented in his essay. However, "some East Pakistani artists, especially Zainul Abedin," he noted approvingly, "certainly show signs of distinction, mainly due to their passionate closeness to the soil."[58] Abedin's consistent and abiding references to the rural and the tribal also dominate the thematics of his formal modernist exploration. Although Abedin clearly recognized the need for high culture and the limitations of relying solely upon realism—the evidentiary and the documentary—the forbidden Hindu-Bengali high cultural referents led him to attempt to develop a "Bengali modernism" based on folk motifs of the region, abstracting the rural into decorative schemas characterized by rhythm and arrangement of color and pattern. The curiously divided nature of his artistic practice from the early 1950s onward therefore was a dual strategy to narrate the fraught present and to create popular *and* high cultural forms.

The secession of East Pakistan was accomplished in 1971, by which time Pakistani state dominance *and* hegemony had failed utterly. The period leading up to Bangladeshi independence was marked by increasing repression by

West Pakistani forces of East Bengali aspirations and by murder, brutality, and repression by the West Pakistani army on a scale that rivals other genocidal episodes of the twentieth century.[59] The failure of West Pakistani elites to transfer power to the East Pakistan–based Awami League, which was elected with the largest number of votes during the 1970 elections, had exacerbated matters, as had the large numbers of refugees from the Eastern wing fleeing into India to escape internal repression. The 1971 war between India and Pakistan, in which the latter suffered a decisive defeat, finally resulted in the birth of Bangladesh. In this charged context, Abedin's development of Bengali modernism could not be sustained in his own work. It had become eclipsed by the urgency of deploying evidentiary modes documenting events, rather than metaphorizing them in an abstracted modernism.

The predicament of Abedin as an East Bengali/East Pakistani artist situated in the very heart of Pakistani bureaucracy can be understood better through Mahmood Mamdani's distinction between political identity and cultural identity in the era of the nation-state. Cultural identity is "multiple," "cumulative," and not territorial, but political identity, "enforced through the state through law, is singular." Cultural identity "may have a territorial resonance, but it is not reducible to a territorial dimension, nor is it reducible to power. Political identity on the contrary, is enforced through law and is an effect of power."[60] Abedin had a long career as a Pakistani state official, but his efforts to create art institutions in both wings were clearly "cultural," not "political," and are most evident in his advocacy for the preservation of crafts in Swat in West Pakistan and for the need for museums in both wings of the country as late as 1971.[61] Abedin even wrote favorably on the work of the traditionalist miniature painter Haji Mohammad Sharif, who was employed at the National College of Art in Lahore as a teacher in miniature techniques.[62] Similarly, his advocacy of Bengali modernism, situated in East Bengal yet informed by modernism in Calcutta art and in transnational modernism, was cumulatively "cultural" and cosmopolitan in the sense of coalescing multiple geographic and aesthetic registers.

ZUBEIDA AGHA

Zubeida Agha was born in Lyallpur (now Faisalabad, Pakistan) in 1922 and lived in Karachi and Lahore before settling in Islamabad. She led a mostly reclusive life and was deeply committed to painting. Agha's enlightened family of professionals and officials encouraged her early interest in art. Her brother, Agha Abdul Hamid, who later became a powerful bureau-

crat and an important critic of modern art, was a supporter of Zubeida Agha throughout his life and encouraged her early training by arranging for her to take lessons beginning in 1944 in Lahore with B. C. Sanyal. Sanyal was an artist who had earlier been associated with the Mayo School of Art but who now maintained his own studio, which also served as an important meeting place for progressive writers, poets, and other intellectuals.[63] In 1946, Agha began studying with an Italian artist, Mario Perlingieri, apparently a former student of Picasso, who had been an Italian prisoner of war in Lahore during World War II. Through Perlingieri's mediation, Agha developed her fully modernist artistic orientation. She was also deeply inspired by the paintings of the pioneering modernist Amrita Sher-Gil, who had died in Lahore in 1941 but whose unconventional life and art had become the stuff of legend upon her early death.[64]

Early on, Agha developed an abstract, ornamental, painterly language, which she continued to explore throughout her life, remaining an independent painter who stubbornly charted her own trajectory without much influence from other artists or artistic trends. In an early painting, *Metamorphosis* (1947), modeled and seemingly anatomical shapes and uncanny contours are reminiscent of automatic drawings and other surrealist maneuvers (Figure 2.8). Nevertheless, Agha was not primarily interested in the Freudian unconscious. Her concentrated, lifelong engagement with modernism was primarily formal and phenomenological, arrived at by her extended study of Greek philosophy, classical Western music, and mysticism and an abiding fascination with the urban. An important early painting in this respect is *Beethoven's Fifth Symphony* (1949) (Figure 2.9), in which nonobjective tumescent shapes and exploding forms visually translate the mood of a Western abstract symphonic composition into spatial dynamism. Agha continued to return to many of the motifs that animate her early work, simplifying and concentrating this visual language in her later career. An intensely private individual who never married, she brought a seriousness and commitment to her artistic career that distinguished her not only from all other women artists who were her contemporaries but from most male artists as well.[65] (Ahmed Parvez (1926–79), who spent a decade in the United Kingdom beginning in 1955 before returning to Pakistan, is another important modernist who forged a dynamic language of colorist abstraction. In contrast with the contemplative architectonics of Agha's work, however, Parvez's explosive forms mirror his volatile existential dilemmas.)[66]

While remaining detached and aloof from the regular circuits of art school training and from the bohemian circles of male artists who frequented cafés,

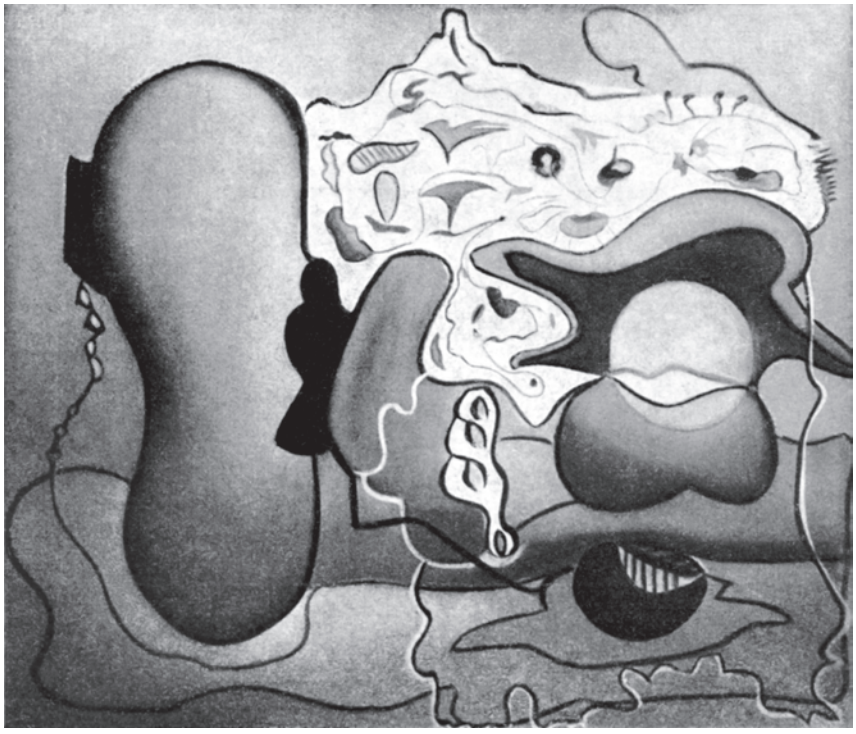


FIGURE 2.8. *Zubeida Agha,* Metamorphosis, *1947. Oil or tempera. 56 × 71 cm. (Courtesy Agha Arshad Ali.)*

Agha nevertheless became deeply engaged in institutional development (Figure 2.10). Her most sustained commitment, beginning in 1961, was as director for sixteen years of the Rawalpindi Art Gallery, a venue of the government-supported Society of Contemporary Art. In this capacity, she worked incessantly with limited resources to mount group and solo exhibitions of artists in the country and abroad, promoting established artists such as Chughtai and also the younger modernists.[67] Agha was involved in discussions and plans for setting up a national art gallery and collection, to which she gifted her personal collection to form its nucleus.[68]

Zubeida Agha's 1949 solo exhibition in Karachi heralded the arrival of transnational abstraction and painterly modernism in Pakistan. She had "fired the first shot,"[69] noted a critic, and her provocative exhibition of "ultra-modern"[70] paintings is reported to have "nearly" instigated a "minor riot."[71] Soon after, between 1950 and 1953, Agha traveled abroad. She studied in Paris and at the St. Martin's School in London and visited museums and galleries,

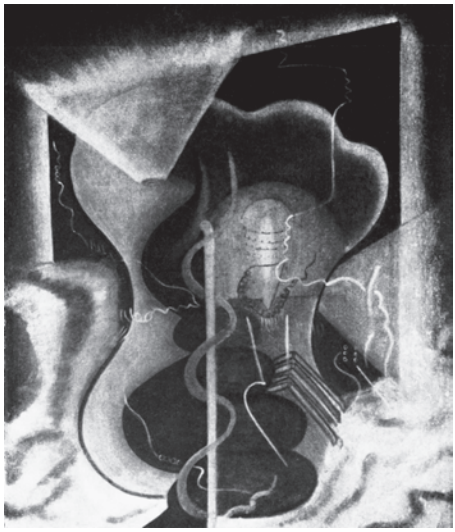


FIGURE 2.9.
Zubeida Agha, Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, *1949. Oil or tempera. 66 × 51 cm. (Courtesy Agha Arshad Ali.)*

FIGURE 2.10. *Zubeida Agha with Shakir Ali (left) and Ali Imam (center) at the Asian Child Art Exhibition, Lahore, 1955. (Courtesy Agha Arshad Ali.)*

further honing her artistic style. She exhibited her works in London and Paris, where the distinctiveness of her style was attributed to her indefinable oriental character. She noted during her visit to Europe that "in Pakistan I was quite often criticized. It was said that what I painted was Westernized. Well, when I came to London I went to see the Principal of the art school and after seeing my sketches he remarked: 'You have something typically Eastern—it is entirely your own and it is very good. Don't lose it by coming in contact with Western Art.'"[72] Similarly, a review of her solo exhibition in London in 1951 characterized her as a "painter who catches some of the mystery of the East while appreciating the lighter side of Western life."[73] As we have seen in the case of Chughtai and will further see in the case of Rasheed Araeen, South Asian Muslim artists were continually interpellated as oriental and Muslim artists and were asked to conform to orientalism's traditional codes.

Nevertheless, her work could not be fully understood by recourse to such boilerplate orientalist explanations. "Critics noted that instead of the flat, two-dimensional quality peculiar to Asian art, Zubeida's work evidenced a definite search for the 'third dimension,' which is 'always of architectural origin,'"[74] unlike the flattened picture plane of Chughtai's watercolors. Agha's third dimension was viewed as an architectonic modernist language, in which the dynamism and balance of compositional elements expressed ideas, tonalities, and moods, rather than visually evoking or representing the Mughal world.

Although some of her early work, such as *In the Forest* (1958), is inspired by the art of Jamini Roy and depictions of the rural (Figure 2.11), her later paintings are more universalist, vacillating between depiction and abstraction, and are characterized above all by dazzling colorist and decorative motifs. Before her travels to Europe, her palette was somber and restrained, but upon her return she began developing her mature artistic style, by abandoning folk references and rendering closer focus on individual forms, now painted with a sense of assurance and a much brighter palette. Later works, such as *Carnival* (1978) (Plate 7) and *Flowers in Front of a Window* (1984) (Plate 8), are composed of bright and twisted organic shapes, precise, flat, and complex and set against a flattened geometric plane, suggestive of a scientific schema of cells or some other complex organism whose elements are in dynamic tension, depicted in an abstract space. Not surrealist or decorative, the works neither addresses the viewer's Freudian ego nor do they conform to a sense of pleasing rhythm that characterizes Abedin's modernism. Rather, their fractured pieces evoke a disjointed and riven phenomenological subject.

Agha's works bring an alienated perceptual subjectivity to viewers, dis-

FIGURE 2.11. *Zubeida Agha,* In the Forest, *1958. Oil on board. 49.5 × 60 cm. (Courtesy Agha Arshad Ali.)*

avowing harmony and reconciliation within the picture plane by keeping formal forces in opposition. The chromatic schema in Agha's late paintings is characterized by bright, intense color. Yet the very richness of her floral, ornamental surface aesthetic is estranging in its effects on the viewer. Following Oleg Grabar's phenomenological conception of ornament as mediation,[75] I suggest that Agha's nonrepetitive and fractured ornamental aesthetic provides a screen upon which the demand for modernist subjectivity is projected. Grabar's working definition of *ornament* is "any decoration that has no referent outside of the object on which it is found, except in technical manuals"; *decoration* is "anything applied to a structure or an object that is not necessary to its stability, use, or understanding of that structure or object."[76] Grabar further suggests that "the word 'abstract' should . . . be capitalized and restricted to a contemporary movement." In this regard, Agha's works traverse all three categories. They are decorative in the sense of partly referring to objects and motifs, either as painterly motifs or by their titles. They are also ornamental in creating decorative patterns that do not refer to an outside, and, furthermore, they are "abstract" in the sense of participating

in the language of transnational nonobjective modernism. Their ornamental aesthetic is above all characterized by its asymmetry, which marks a consequential estrangement of the individual from harmonious identification with nationalist subjectivity or ideological conformism. This alienation emerges in even sharper relief precisely due to Zubeida Agha's close relationship with the Pakistani state bureaucracy, as she never addressed a nationalist icon or theme in her art even when she was engaged in the promotion of art on the national platform, and despite her belonging to a powerful family employed in civil service.[77]

Although Agha's paintings even in her later period are rarely fully nonobjective, her work has persistently grappled with developing a visual language of philosophical and metaphysical ideas and moods that were neither representations nor symbols but ideas and moods expressed in architectonic modernist compositions. Here the writings of the philosopher Theodor Adorno on the relation between lyric poetry and society also insightfully situate the painterly modernism of Zubeida Agha and Shakir Ali.[78] Precisely due its detachment, poetry's particularity and individualism for Adorno offers an alternative to a disenchanted social world: "This social condition impresses itself on the poetic form in a negative way: the more heavily social conditions weigh, the more unrelentingly the poem resists, refusing to give in to any heteronomy and constituting itself purely according to its own particular laws."[79] The critic's duty is to therefore understand "how the entirety of a society, its unity containing contradictions, appears in a work; in which respects the work remains true to its society, and in which it transcends that society. . . . Social ideas should not be brought to works from without but should, instead, be created out of the complete organized view of things present in the works themselves."[80] Adorno's insistence on the necessity of the cultural artifact constituting its own universe of meaning corroborates Charles Altieri's reading of modernism (examined in the Introduction), where "works of art possess reality rather than refer to it."[81] Agha's committed refusal to reference the past either via style or by subject matter and the importance of her modernist abstractions in enacting their own visual universe of forces at play are thus compelling individual *and* "social" interventions in an Adornian sense of a profound response to social reality marked by impasses.[82]

Agha faced great difficulty in expressing her concerns outside the bounds of their purely private significance, which is captured in numerous anecdotes, when her silence and refusal to elaborate on her work repeatedly frustrated critics. "Every detail seemed to have meaning for her and whatever my own confusion, her sense of 'spiritual harmony' was unmistakable," recounted a

critic.[83] When asked to explain the theme of one of her compositions, her laconic reply, that it was "about nothing . . . it is just an Abstraction," was characteristic.[84] Adorno recognizes this as a "peculiar danger" of works created according to their own principles, in that "its own principle of individuation never guarantees the creation of compelling authenticity. It is powerless to prevent itself from remaining stuck in naked, isolated experience."[85] In this respect, Agha's modernism remained largely inner, private, and hermetic.

Modernism had arrived at mid-century in the newly formed Pakistan through Agha's artistic practice, but without an adequate critical ground and without a corresponding art historical debate that could link painterly modernism with society. Unlike in the case of Chughtai, Agha's refusal to ground her work on Indo-Persian poetic tropes and Mughal themes or forms meant that her modernist departures created enigmas for her interpreters. Since Agha never joined a teaching institution, left no public writings, and, due to barriers of gender and class, remained isolated from circles of critics and artists, she had virtually no important critical interlocutor among the literary intelligentsia.[86] But overall, her practice offered a more advanced analogue of the relation between self and society than was available in critiques of the time.

Some critics, however, sought to situate her abstraction and modernism in relation to Islamicate ideas, rather than as representational motifs, or on the recovery of older materials and techniques that Chughtai was seen to have embodied.[87] Azra Zaman has suggested that Agha's "break from the representational . . . is very close to the ideal set by the Moghul painter, with his philosophy of space relations, color harmony and decorative unity of design."[88] The artist's brother and consistent supporter, the enlightened bureaucrat and critic Agha Abdul Hamid, discerned a fundamental relationship between Qurʿanic interpretation and the painter's later works: "The quest for understanding the nature of reality and the problems of life which started in 1944 gradually and imperceptibly changed over the years into a joyful acceptance of life itself—its infinite variety, its beauty, its multitudinous colors and forms, the change of seasons, the drama of the rising and setting sun and the enchanting softness of moonlight. All these and many other things like them are the *ayat* [signs] of Allah and their joyous acceptance, and living in harmony with His creation is perhaps the very meaning and purpose of life."[89] The word *ayat* bears two meanings with reference to the Qurʾan. It can refer simply to any individual verse, but the word is also found in numerous places in the Qurʾan itself to refer to cycles of nature, biological growth, decay, and rebirth and to the play of human and divine forces in history. All of these are

manifest signs [*ayat*], yet still require use of reflection [*fikr*] and reasoning [*'aql*].[90] Agha Abdul Hamid thus reads the painter's work as a visual interpretation of Qur'anic *ayat*, but his reading of the artwork itself offers a meta-level gloss on modernism itself. In other words, Agha Abdul Hamid seeks to situate painterly modernism as an analogue to, and perhaps within, Islamic discursive and textual traditions. In the views of these critics, therefore, Zubeida Agha's modernism forged a new link to Islamicate tradition, but one that did not depend upon historical thematic, technical, or stylistic articulations of Islamic art but rather addressed its ideational dimensions. Agha's work thus compelled critics to expand and deepen the relation of visual form to Islamicate ideas, a considerable departure from the illustrative approach to tradition in interpretations of Chughtai's work.

In her own practice, Agha followed a rigorous and consistent modernism throughout her career, which helped open up modern South Asian Muslim subjectivity to the potential of modernist abstraction. Efforts to situate her work in dialogue with Islamicate tradition are also critical in opening up the question of how that tradition might seek a relationship with modernism. This reception of her work propels earlier understandings of Islamic ornament and decoration uncompromisingly toward subjectivity and abstraction[91] and compels her critics to move toward a more expansive and deeper conceptual and philosophical understanding of Islamic aesthetics, rather than continuing to situate modern Islamic art at the level of stylistic, thematic, or material borrowings from the past.

SHAKIR ALI

Zubeida Agha preceded Shakir Ali in terms of inaugurating modernism in Pakistan, but the latter exerted much greater influence on its development. Shakir Ali was born in Rampur (now in post-1947 India) in 1916 into a family that included the celebrated loquacious Indian Muslim political leaders, the brothers Shaukat Ali and Muhammad Ali. A sensitive and sickly child whose mother had died early, Shakir Ali initially had aspirations to attend Rabindranath Tagore's university at Santiniketan in Bengal to learn dance and also to become a fiction writer. However, after seeing an exhibition of Amrita Sher-Gil in Delhi, he decided to become an artist.[92] Shakir Ali began his artistic training in 1937 by attending classes at the studios of the Ukil brothers in Delhi, who practiced and taught a late Bengal School style. In 1938, he began attending the Sir Jamsedjee Jeejeebhoy School of Art (known as the Sir J.J. School of Art) in Bombay.[93] This school had been a stronghold

FIGURE 2.12.
Shakir Ali, Village Scene with Three Deers, *1941. Gouache on paper. 26 × 20 cm. (Courtesy Wahab Jaffer Collection, a part of the Rangoonwala Collection.)*

of naturalism and, during the principalship of Gladstone Solomon (1918–36), had also emphasized mural techniques based on Western art and on Indian examples, such as Ajanta, as a rival to the Bengal School.[94] By the time Shakir Ali arrived, the principal was Charles Gerrard, who had trained at the Royal College of Art in London. Gerrard had started to encourage impressionist and modernist styles and subjective expression.[95] Shakir Ali enrolled in a course on murals and began to paint works based on a flattened narrative style and to associate with the Bombay Contemporary Art Group (Figure 2.12).[96] Between 1938 and 1941, he also began to contribute short stories written in the vein of the Progressive Writers Association to journals in Urdu.[97] His stories comprise realist progressive writing, romantic narratives written from a woman's viewpoint, and psychosexual encounters reminiscent of much Urdu short story writing from the 1930s onward. He also wrote a short essay on Dostoyevsky and another entitled "Soviet Art and Artists," published in 1945, which now reads virtually as a propaganda piece describing the Soviet Union as a utopia for artists. But even in his paean to the Soviet Union, he argued that, despite its emphasis on realism, individual stylistic differences among the artists remained and indeed contributed to new ways of depicting reality itself. The multiple strains that make up Shakir Ali's intellectual and artistic maturity are evident in these writings, but the tension between realism and modernism was later definitely weighted in favor of the latter.

Shakir Ali moved to London after the end of World War II to study at the

Slade School of Art, which he attended for three years. According to artist Zahoorul Akhlaque (1941–99), who lived at the home of Shakir Ali for a time as his student, the polymath scientist and humanist Dr. Salimuzzaman Siddiqui—who had translated the work of the German poet Rainer Maria Rilke into Urdu—apparently acted as spiritual guide [*hazrat-i khizr*] to Shakir Ali at this juncture, encouraging him to go abroad to continue his studies.[98] During his stay in Europe, Shakir Ali associated with socialist youth groups.[99] While in London, along with delegates from the World Festival of Democratic Youth, he visited the village of Lidice near Prague, which had been completely destroyed by the Nazis. In 1949, he moved to France to study under the cubist painter and influential teacher, André Lhote (1885–1962), who had earlier taught the photographer Henri Cartier-Bresson and other Indian artists.[100] He then moved to Prague on a scholarship and worked there as a textile designer. Prague served as an important intellectual influence on him. The artist continued his involvement in student and youth activities, including attending the World Congress of Students in 1950 and traveling on the Students' Train of Peace across Czechoslovakia. He had also been deeply moved by his reading of Julius Fucik's *Notes from the Gallows*.[101] Fucik, a writer associated with the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, who had been tortured and executed by the Nazis, had written the influential book in prison, and Shakir Ali had read it in Urdu translation.[102] The artist married a Czech woman in Prague and describes his two-year stay there as the happiest time of his life. Nevertheless, he decided to move to the newly formed nation-state of Pakistan in 1951 in order to participate in its development. After teaching for a brief period at a high school in Karachi, in 1952 he moved to the Mayo School of Arts in Lahore, where he became principal in 1961.[103]

Upon his arrival in Lahore in 1952, Shakir Ali almost immediately became associated with the city's cafés and literary circles. At that time, competing stylistic and ideological groups, including the secularist and non-nationalist Progressive Writers Association,[104] those associated with the Halqa-i Arbab-i Zauq (circle of aesthetes), and others who were promulgating a right-wing Pakistani ideology were engaged in lively and fractious debates in meetings and journals.[105] Much of this debate followed the shifting contours of the continuing battle between progressivism [*taraqqi pasand*] equated with "art for life's sake" and literary modernism [*jadidiyat*], termed "art for art's sake."[106] "But the glibness of these phrases," notes Sean Pue, "masks a deeper sense of fundamental moral and political difference between literature focused on external (*zahir*) and literature focused on the 'internal' (*batin*)." These categories, derived from Sufi thought, were appropriated and inverted by

progressive criticism to privilege the external, equating it with Soviet-style socialist realism. "There came to be no room for any overlap between these two forms. As a result, one is left in a peculiar situation in which the *use of metaphorical language to describe real life would be considered impossible*."[107] Shakir Ali's move toward modernism needs to be situated accordingly, as an affirmation of its metaphoric and allegorical potentialities in offering deeper insights into the self and society than the kind of reductive realism the progressives had increasingly embraced from the late 1930s.

The establishment of Pakistan introduced urgent new questions regarding the need for cultural forms specific to the new nation-state. Recent scholarship has reopened the importance of studying this formative period of intellectual history as central to subsequent Pakistani cultural politics.[108] Deploying a Gramscian analysis of hegemony, Saadia Toor has argued that Pakistani political and social impasses were repeatedly transformed into debates conducted on a culturalist plane in which literary journals played an important role and where the fervor of these debates corresponded with periods of acute national crises. Toor identifies one such period of crisis as precisely during the late 1940s and early 1950s, when the independence of Pakistan engendered a new set of questions regarding the role of language, religion, and consolidation of national identity against the internationalist claims of the Progressive Writers Association.[109] Shakir Ali's own orientation had decisively shifted toward formalist modernism, but he remained close to many committed leftist writers, such as Sibte Hasan, and sheltered his literary friends and labor leaders in his home when they faced state persecution.

In 1953, a group of young writers and modern artists began issuing a short-lived journal, *Khayal*, which was intended to address issues faced by modernist postindependence writers. Their discussions included the relevance for contemporary culture of the modernism of T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, and Baudelaire and the painterly modernism of Cezanne, Matisse, Klee, and Kandinsky, along with the significance of Kabir, Mirabai, and numerous historical Muslim thinkers.[110] Shakir Ali contributed one of his paintings and an essay on the history of Italian painting in the March 1953 edition. This volume also included a significant essay on the artist by Muzaffar Ali Syed, situating the artist's work in relation to European artistic modernism and arguing that Shakir Ali had discovered formalist abstraction in painting and music in diverse local manifestations, including the use of color in Mughal and Rajput paintings and the "arabesque" rhythms of Arab poetry.[111] The journal helped introduce Shakir Ali's art and thought to a wider audience in Lahore and beyond. Later, when he became principal, the artist decreased his association with

FIGURE 2.13. *Shakir Ali (left) with poet Faiz Ahmad Faiz (right) at the Karachi Arts Council, ca. 1969–70. (Courtesy Salima Hashmi.)*

café life but remained close to many writers until his death in 1975 (Figure 2.13).[112]

Shakir Ali's pedagogy and personality were decisive in shaping a new generation of students and fellow artists who emerged from the 1950s to the 1970s, including Ahmed Parvez, the figurative cubist painter Ali Imam, the United Kingdom–based calligraphic modernist Anwar Jalal Shemza (1929–85), and the conceptual artist Zahoorul Akhlaque. During the early 1950s, many of these artists had already organized themselves into the modernist Lahore Art Circle, even though some of the artists were not actually his students.[113] Shakir Ali's relationship with his colleagues and students was characterized by informality, as well as by a curious blend of detachment and engagement, exerting an almost unspoken influence on them without overt and lengthy critiques in a manner that allowed them to chart their own aesthetic trajectories.[114] For example, Ali Imam recounts that he was unimpressed by Cezanne at the beginning of his artistic career but was rather sympathetic to Van Gogh and Gauguin. Shakir Ali's critique of Imam was typically tersely elliptical: "There is an idiotic emotionalism [*ahmaqana jasbatiyat*] in your paintings.

Can't you understand what Cezanne has accomplished?"[115] Clearly, Shakir Ali had settled upon an idea of modernism as restrained and disciplined exercise, in which formal problems, rather than narrative or expressionist drama, were to persistently remain the focus. Shakir Ali's critique of realism was similarly laconic yet clear. Commenting on his student Ijaz ul Hassan's work, which depicted a child suffering from napalm in Vietnam, Shakir Ali replied to his interviewer: "Are you asking about that *poster*? It's OK—but it's not to my taste [*thik hai—meray bas ki bat nahin*]. I prefer to paint *moods*."[116] Despite his communist sympathies in his youth and his continued friendship with leftist figures such as Sibte Hasan,[117] Shakir Ali had moved away from realism and narrative, toward articulating a modernist universe within the work itself.

To a greater degree than even Zubeida Agha, Shakir Ali exemplifies the problem of the arrival of modernism in Muslim South Asia and the adequacy of language. His contemporaries, writers and critics, especially Intizar Husain and Muhammad Hasan Askari, provide the most incisive descriptions of the artist's capacities and hesitations. In his autobiography, Intizar Husain vividly describes the arrival of Shakir Ali on the Lahori art scene at a time when young artists were dissatisfied with the status quo and were in a mood to rebel against their elders. At the Coffee House in the early 1950s, Husain observed the writer Muzaffar Ali Syed sitting with a stranger: "For a long time I saw that this man neither opened his mouth, not gestured with his head, but continued to cast a dumbfounded stare at Muzaffar, who was expounding at length on the subject of modern painting. Upon leaving the Coffee House with Muzaffar, I asked him, 'Who was that person?' Muzaffar gave me a pitying look at my profound ignorance and replied gravely, 'That's Shakir Ali, who happens to be Asia's greatest modernist [*tajridi*] painter.'"[118] The bewilderment and hyperbole of the Urdu literary intelligentsia in encountering a flesh-and-blood modernist painter exemplifies the sense of newness Shakir Ali's arrival brought to Lahore, but this sense of possibility was also intimately linked with the artist's refusal to enunciate his views in café discussions.[119] Shakir Ali had quickly assumed leadership of new movements in painting, yet his public voice remained fragmentary and marked by silence. His tentative and amorphous statements, even to his closest friends, have become legendary, and even extended to his own self-perception.[120] In the artist's own recollection of his writings during the 1930s and 1940s, he revealingly states that in his stories "written during those strange years, the text contained few words but was mostly made up of dashes and ellipses [*dash aur nuqtay*]," acknowledging that gaps and hesitations were constitutive of his persona.[121] This uncanny play of coming-together yet remaining-separate from public

discussion, in a literary and political milieu in which many were puzzled or hostile to painterly modernism, became characteristic of Shakir Ali's public interactions.[122]

Askari wrote two important essays on the artist, the first published in 1954 and the second in 1960, which provide the most thoughtful account of Shakir Ali's project, illuminated by the critic's knowledge of British and French modernist writing and criticism.[123] Although not explicitly referred to in the essays, European critical reception of Cezanne provides an apt frame by which to understand Askari's view of Shakir Ali's work. In the first essay, Askari was struck by the oppositional balance of various elements in Shakir Ali's work from the early 1950s, as expressed through practice rather than through language-based conceptions:

> He is neither afraid of emotion, nor lets it overcome him. . . . One discovers a solid, non-partisan emotion [*thos aur bay lag jazba*] in his work that cannot be separated from his technique. . . . The line [*naqsh*] and the effect it invokes forms the basis of his work. He sees human experience and the universe in forms of struggle and opposition. . . . His pictures suggest that existence [*vujud*] is premised only on opposition [*tasadum*]. In Shakir Ali's universe, every element of life is bound and limited by others, he is indeed a painter of this very relation [*taʿalluq*].[124]

Askari emphasized that Shakir Ali's modernism, which was built from his own experience and possessed a Cezanne-like solidity of construction, differs from modernism as merely style:

> Modernist painting [*tajridi musavviri*] has become something of a fashion for many of our painters . . . who typically take a natural form and divide it into cubist shapes. For them, modernism is not experiential/praxis [*tajarba*]. By contrast, Shakir Ali's modernism has emerged purely from his own experience/praxis. This is why elements in his pictures do not appear to be fleeing from each other. His colors may be contrasting, but are so solidly applied [*pevast*] that one cannot separate one color from another. . . . Whether one likes his paintings or not, the construction [*banavat*] of his pictures is coherent, and its elements have a robust regulation [*sakht inzibat*] that cannot be found with any of our other painters.[125]

Askari's second essay, written in 1960, closely examined a still life by the artist and presents a rare example of an extended criticism on a single work of modern art in Urdu. Askari considered the work important enough to have included a color reproduction of a painting of a still life (similar to Figure

FIGURE 2.14. *Shakir Ali,* Still Life of Flower in Spring, *1955. Oil. 36.6 × 49 cm. (From Askari,* Sitara ya badban *[1963], frontispiece. Courtesy Wahab Jaffer Collection, part of Rangoonwala Collection.)*

2.14) as a frontispiece to his collected critical essays, *Sitara ya badban* (1963), which was otherwise devoted primarily to literary matters. Askari stressed how this recent painting by Shakir Ali intensified the dialectic of separateness and relationality that was already present in his earlier work. "Objects continue to possess their own separate existence yet also evoke a relation between them. . . . It appears that the entire universe has been encompassed in one vase or in a single leaf."[126] Askari moreover perceived the new work as creating a sense of movement in both space and time, allowing the painter to approach the general through the particular and to relate individual objects to the universe.[127] The artist's new work had "created an even deeper balance between struggle and stasis [*kash makash aur sukun kay darmiyan aik aur bhi gehra tavazun paida kar kay dikhaya hai*]."[128] The relationship between particularity and universality, an allegory of the individual in relation to society, was thus coded as a formalist value. Askari's readings of Shakir Ali marking unity-in-opposition and the density of the elements themselves as re-creating an

entire universe can be set alongside Altieri's observations on the continued relevance of modernism that were discussed in the Introduction and which offered analogues for living-in-difference well before contemporary strands of multiculturalism. Shakir Ali's works thus persistently code irresolvable difference itself as constitutive of identity.

Shakir Ali's own brief writings since his arrival in Pakistan argued for the need for a subjective modernism that might also address wider society. Although some of his postindependence writings were characterized by romanticism regarding the universality of art through the ages since prehistory, others expressed more analytically the dilemmas of the modern artist-subject. In defending modernism, in an interview published in 1957, he claimed that one could find modernist tendencies in painting throughout history, in the sense that it is a method of approaching the fundamental form of the universe through its constituent elements. He claimed that the adoption of modernism by Pakistani artists was therefore not a repudiation of the past but was in a deeper sense in conformity with it.[129] In another essay, published in 1963, he articulated in a more detailed fashion the existential cosmopolitanism of modern artistic practice, claiming that "today, relationships in life have become more complex, and the mutual link between the artist and society that was tied to one group, one nation or religion is no longer there. Under today's industrial commotion, the artist has become lonely to the degree that he has become a stranger [*ajnabi*] to his very self [*zat*]."[130] Development of an artistic subjectivity adequate to contemporary life thus necessitates traversing a number of steps: "First, an artist needs to become familiar with the nature of the artistic medium, for which considerable exercise and practice is necessary. After this, one needs to become deeply aware of one's own psychology of self. This requires considerable time, as the human self is the strangest entity even to oneself, and is continually turbulent like the changing cycle of seasons."[131]

Despite the individuated concerns of the modern artist, Shakir Ali asserted that artists' works *do* fully represent their era and its environment. This is because, although artists may be superficially opposed to each other stylistically, they practice and share deeper existential concerns that cohere their projects together and make them a harbinger [*naqib*] of their time. An observer might be alienated by an encounter with modern art at first, but one needs to search beyond external form [*zahiri ʿaks*], toward mental and emotional states [*kaif aur jazba*] induced by the work. These states are not comprised of local elements but are universal. Although they are a product of a localized social context [*samaji mahol*], yet no nation or individual today

can escape them. Twentieth-century artistic "isms," such as "post-cubism," "surrealism," and so on, have moreover overcome national boundaries, forming transnational linkages. It is much too early to judge the possibilities contained in our modern art, Shakir Ali argued, as "our artists" are still immersed in an inner search, in an early process of accepting elements from their past and their environments and finding styles for their expression.

Shakir Ali's position regarding modern art's current inner exploratory horizon was in clear opposition to that of many progressives. In a work published in 1951, for instance, the poet Ali Sardar Jafri had attacked the writers associated with the Halqa-i Arbab-i Zauq (Circle of Aesthetes) for their passive romanticism, stating that "their 'I' [*ana*] did not bear any type of social responsibility, and it inevitably resulted in ambiguity, pessimism, and escapism."[132] In contrast, Shakir Ali noted that artists might well begin to address the social eventually, but this must be postponed to a later time, only after the artist has understood his or her own inner self.[133] He thus stressed that the fashioning of a new modernist subjectivity initially required the bracketing off of direct social and external compulsions.

The trope of artistic cosmopolitanism was continued in Shakir Ali's surprising essay "Letter to Bihzad," published in 1956, possibly in response to Chughtai's repeated references to the celebrated Persian painter. The letter was addressed to Bihzad in heaven, surrounded by other artists—mainly Renaissance painters. Shakir Ali acknowledged that although Bihzad had achieved renown in "our country" due to his influence on Mughal painting, nevertheless it was "our misfortune" that it was Westerners who uncovered details of his life. After listing some of the issues surrounding attribution of authorship in Bihzad's works and acknowledging the greatness of the miniature tradition, Shakir Ali wove the present era into the past in his address to Bihzad:[134]

> Of your legacy of Asia being a center of civilization, only ruins are left, which some incessantly lament. European artistic influence arrived with imperialism, wiping out our cultural entities. . . . The machine age further strangulated its techniques and its pure oriental spirit [*khalis mashriqiyat ki ruh*]. . . . Although some painters in the present have struggled to remain faithful to it, due to inability to modernize, they have become merely imitators [*lakir kay faqir*]. . . . Matisse, who must have recently arrived [in heaven], will undoubtedly have informed you of new artistic movements. I can only imagine the free environment [in heaven], where you all enjoy brotherhood and unity [*yak jahti*] amongst yourselves. . . . [But] some stub-

born artists [down here] are also involved in this project of unity, and with your prayers, might well achieve success in deploying art in the service of human brotherhood.[135]

This letter critiques Chughtai's orientalism, which drew a sharp distinction between the East and the West and which insisted on the need for the East to own its distinctive artistic character. By appropriating the figure of Bihzad in conversation with the likes of Michelangelo and Matisse, Shakir Ali drew attention to the unifying and cosmopolitan dimensions of both classical and modern art. Today, however, this consciousness is enacted by none other than modernism itself, according to the artist.[136]

Shakir Ali's romanticism forms a key aspect of his later persona and was nurtured by his readings of Fucik's *Notes from the Gallows* and his tremendous attachment to the poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke, to the degree that he incorporated verses from Rilke in at least one painting from the 1960s.[137] For Shakir Ali, the simplified and abstracted shapes of the figure, the bird, the cage, the moon, and flowers were metaphors for human finitude and its transcendence through art and imagination (Plate 9).[138] It was this romantic cosmopolitan subjectivity that was immune to motivations based on religion or the nation-state, as is clear from his refusal to take sides during the war between India and Pakistan in 1965, even when provoked by the writer Intizar Husain, as discussed in the Introduction.[139] In *The Dark Moon* (1965) (Plate 10), executed during the 1965 war, the circular moon is divided into two hemispheres on a diagonal, yet this division does not coincide with the two vertical areas whose boundary appears to run through the center of the circle. Moreover, the built landscape, suggested by jagged square forms, also continues across the vertical divide, albeit with a thin break acknowledging only a minor separation. The moon's division literally "at an angle," resists the sky's vertical divide, suggesting that "higher" objects and concepts cannot be limited by the rigid horizontal boundaries and vertical horizons of the warring nation-states. Husain himself is viewed as among the least ideological of Pakistani intellectuals, and it is therefore no accident that both Shakir Ali and Intizar Husain were paragons of silence during café discussions: "If there was anyone besides Shakir *sahib* who could stay mute for hours during learned debates, it was myself," recounts Husain, adding that he had fully intended to "*inshallah* [God willing] surpass Shakir *sahib* and set a new record for silence."[140]

Shakir Ali's haunting silence, recourse to romanticism, and painterly modernism via practice bypassed narrower ideological divides to fashion an inner modernist subjectivity for the artist. The artist's partial turn to Qur'anic and

poetic calligraphy during the late 1960s in some ways visually modified this silence by acknowledging the relation of the self to a longer discursive tradition and by relaying his cosmopolitan concerns to address the wider Muslim world (Plate 11). During the 1971 war with India, however, Shakir Ali's concern was again expressed by bewilderment and concern for his fellow artists in East Pakistan—especially Zainul Abedin—rather than by any nationalist rhetoric of sacrifice and bravery.[141]

Finally, although this book's approach is not primarily psychological, the sexual ambivalence in Shakir Ali's persona is clearly relevant to his artistic subjectivity. His keen initial desire to train as a dancer, his two failed marriages to European women, and his attachment to Rilke are some indications of the issue of Ali's masculinity and the question of the other in relation to the self.[142] According to Biddy Martin, Rilke's lover, Lou Andreas-Salomé, was attracted to him precisely because of his sexual ambivalence: "Rilke seemed both masculine and feminine at once, exemplifying for [Salomé] the basis of creativity in a primary narcissism and fundamental bisexuality."[143] Shakir Ali might have found Rilke's life and works resonant in this respect as well. The artist's detached yet tormented Sufi-like persona was very visible to his friends and his students.[144] One of his friends, for example, noted that his "intellect was immersed in a ceaseless intuitive quest [*quvvat-i fikr vajdan men dubi hui*] . . . a state that many others arrive at only after sustained mystical exercises."[145] His close friend Sibte Hasan contrasted the poet Iqbal as a creative agent confidently overcoming opposition and danger with Shakir Ali's persona as an existential man afflicted by spiritual pain and inner restlessness, similar to Kafka's and Dostoyevsky's characters.[146] Here, Iqbal's masculinist celebration of creative agency is complicated by Shakir Ali, who eschews triumphalism and insists on reckoning with the inner costs of inhabiting modernity.

Shakir Ali modernized postcolonial artistic subjectivity in Pakistan by persistently disregarding formulaic responses and opening up the question of the impact of modernity on the individual's inner state. Despite the political and ideological blockages in Pakistani public life, his focus on the relationship between modernism and subjectivity deeply influenced emerging artists. Moreover, Shakir Ali's trajectory of modernism, which advocated first discovering materials and processes and then exploring the turbulent inner self and finally seeking a more overt relationship with society, although not necessarily unfolding in stagist fashion, was prognostic for subsequent developments, as will be seen in the analysis of Sadequain later in this study.

Chughtai embarked on a path toward artistic modernism by recognizing the necessity for grounding art in a discursive relationship with writers and poets such as Muhammad Iqbal and Muhammad Din Tasir. He also recognized that modern patronage and audience arrangements in the age of nationalism had decisively shifted from the early modern era. His response to these changes, however, avoided both inner exploration of the self and intervention in outer social frameworks. The critic Akbar Naqvi has articulated the unease that emergent modernist painters felt regarding the Bengal School/Chughtai watercolor-based works: "In a strong way oil paint leads to subjectivity . . . which our artists learnt to use with competent skill, also prompting them to aspire after something more than mere sentiment."[147] For a properly modernist artistic subjectivity to emerge at mid-century, apart from an oil-based formalist language, the creation of new artistic institutions such as schools and exhibition venues was also necessary. This allowed artists to begin to address internal and psychic landscapes as analogues for the aporias of the social landscape in newly formed Pakistan. Significantly, the subjectivity of none of the three artists discussed here was founded on the sort of masculinist codes that many European modernist artists such as Picasso reveled in, marking their openness to otherness in terms of gender as well. Indeed, the trajectory of modernism followed in this study indicates that gender and sexuality are zones of hesitation and ambiguity, rather than of patriarchal conquest that metropolitan modernism is often characterized by.

Zainul Abedin addressed his artwork and his pedagogy to the quandaries of marginalized Bengali identity in the framework of Pakistani nationalism by drawing upon folk culture, but also through his efforts to create a high Bengali modernism. Zubeida Agha and Shakir Ali explored the inner dilemmas of affiliation and belonging, of the dialectic of fidelity and betrayal of the past, and of the refusal to address the nation-state, by their discursive silence, stylistic opacity, and cosmopolitanism.

The lives of Zubeida Agha and Shakir Ali—and of many key artists of the next generation, such as Zahoorul Akhlaque—remained marked by an enigmatic public silence, suggesting that their works instantiated a more advanced project—allegorizing ethical and social dilemmas through *practice*—than was possible through criticism, debate, and realism. These artists explored inner quandaries by their public silence and through their deep commitment to working these out by modernist practice. Charles Altieri's observation, that modernist artists "realized what is only now becoming painfully clear—

that any assertion of values based on particular social and political structures is doomed to seem partial and to create *differends* whose grievances cannot be heard within the dominant structure," is thus an apt analysis of the birth of modernism in Pakistan under its impossible nationalist predicaments.[148] Nevertheless, critics' struggles to understand their works in relation to Islamic art enabled new ways of conceptualizing the relationship between "tradition" and modernism, by seeing how artists understood the former's "inner" conceptual and formal values rather than by searching simply for thematic or technical continuity. The move to modernism deepened artists' philosophical and intellectual responses to modern life. The modernist artists' refusals to articulate their concerns in language allowed them to bypass ideological minefields, but their work did not lead immediately to a wider debate on the relationship between modernity and the self, due to undeveloped critical discourse on visual art and the gap between modernism and public life. The formation of new subjectivities was, however, crucial during this era. It allowed subsequent artists to reconfigure new relationships between art and society, as examined in the next chapters.

CHAPTER 3 SADEQUAIN AND CALLIGRAPHIC MODERNISM

This chapter examines the career of the immensely productive Sadequain Naqqash (1930–87), Pakistan's most celebrated artist. A self-trained, larger-than-life figure, Sadequain charted a singular trajectory in enacting a paradoxical subjectivity. He remained close to national aesthetic ideologies that promoted calligraphy under the increasing Islamization of the 1970s and 1980s, yet maintained a persona that simultaneously relayed aspects of transgressive Indo-Persian Sufism into a dialogue with transnational modernism during the 1950s and 1960s in order to create a modernist language characterized here as "calligraphic modernism." Between 1955 and 1975, artists from North Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia reworked calligraphic motifs in entirely new ways.[1] Earlier attitudes toward classical calligraphy were not only decisively modified, but genres such as portraiture and still life were also reshaped by a renewed concern with the abstract and expressive possibilities of the Arabic script. Rather than beautifully rendering a religious or poetic verse or endowing it with ornamental form, the script was often imbued with modernist figuration and abstraction to a degree that mitigated against a straightforward literal or narrative meaning.[2] The imbrication of modernist calligraphy with post-cubist art thus represents a broad artistic movement. Sadequain, by referencing Islamicate traditions—in parallel with the efforts of artists from West Asia and North Africa who were also developing a similar language of calligraphic modernism during that era—contributed to the development of transnational modernist Muslim aesthetics during the era of nationalism. Calligraphic modernism formed an increasingly influential modality in Pakistani art during the 1960s and 1970s. The artist Hanif Ramay (1930–2006) had pioneered the exploration of calligraphy with reference to modernism during the 1950s. Iqbal Geoffrey (born 1939) developed an expressionist calligraphic practice in the United Kingdom and the United States during the 1960s that was accompanied by a playful Dadaist performative persona. Anwar Jalal Shemza, who was also a noted Urdu writer, moved to the United Kingdom during the mid-1950s and developed an important body of calligraphic modernist work. Inspired by Paul Klee, calligraphy, and carpet

designs—his family had earlier been involved in the carpet business—he worked out the implications of his aesthetic modality over the course of his career, with rigorous and disciplined practice. His *Roots* series, executed in the mid-1980s at the end of his life, relays the anguish of diaspora in a formally restrained language based on calligraphy and ornamental designs of oriental carpets and textiles.

Sadequain, however, became the greatest exponent of calligraphic modernism in Pakistan, continuing the process of appropriation and transformation of Muslim South Asian cultural and artistic practices, which had been worked over already by earlier modernist poets and intellectuals. His extended residence in Paris during the 1960s was also of foundational importance in the development of his modernism. By the late 1960s, his work swerved in the direction of becoming overtly "Islamic," informed by calligraphy and Urdu poetry. Above all, after the late 1950s, the artist sought to inhabit modernity through the trope of heroic subjectivity, which the poet Muhammad Iqbal (1877–1938) had formulated. Iqbal's activist Islamic transnationalism was an indispensable referent for Sadequain's artistic development. Sadequain's quest for artistic subjectivity was, however, also articulated in relation to the interplay of larger structural forces of an increasingly rightist nation-state ideology. Nevertheless, in his calligraphic work and his murals, Sadequain effected a new populism in relation to modern art, relaying its importance to audiences far beyond what Shakir Ali and Zubeida Agha had. To understand the scope of Sadequain's influence, it is necessary to briefly outline the legacy of individuation available to him.

INDIVIDUATION IN MUSLIM SOUTH ASIAN ART

This section explores only some of the cultural developments in which one can trace the emergence of individuation in early modern Muslim South Asian art. Rather than arguing for a causal or one-to-one connection between specific motifs and Sadequain's articulations, this exploration offers a partial sense of the milieu and provides examples of the kinds of genealogical trajectories the artist might have drawn from.

Later Mughal painting during the seventeenth century had begun to emphasize individualism in portraiture in a double sense, both in the emergence of distinctive personal artistic style and in the realistic depiction of the subject. "Portraiture under the Mughals had become so precise that it is possible to trace the changes in appearance of some courtiers and princes from youth to old age," a recent study noted.[3] *Muraqqaʿ* albums composed in both Timu-

rid and Safavid Persia and in Mughal India (discussed in chapter 1) included esteemed examples of paintings and calligraphy.[4] The development of artistic calligraphy in India was thus closely related to the arts of the book.[5] Usually written by officials/calligraphers, the prefaces to many Timurid, Safavid, and Mughal albums provide an important source of historical information about individual calligraphers, their techniques, and their social status.[6] Among the Timurid and Safavid albums, the six classical (pre-*nastaʿliq*) styles of calligraphy are routinely mentioned, along with seven styles of painting.[7] Timurid Persian culture produced important innovations in calligraphy. The *nastaʿliq* script, called the "bride of the Islamic styles of writing," emerged during the thirteenth century and became the primary vehicle of Persian literary culture, until the rise of printing.[8] In the case of Urdu, *nastaʿliq* has retained its importance in the age of mechanical and electronic reproduction. Unlike Arabic and Persian, which were adapted for mechanical typesetting, Urdu printing continued to be produced until recently by lithography from a handwritten calligraphed original and, more recently, from electronic typesetting.[9]

The arguably more expressive *shikasta* ("broken script"), which developed after the sixteenth century, was particularly influential for the South Asian context (Figures 3.1, 3.2).[10] The idiosyncrasy of this widely used script also invoked an allegory of poetic subjectivity. Historian Annemarie Schimmel notes how *shikasta* provided a bridge between poetic syntax and the script:

> It seems more than an accident that this style developed at exactly the same time when the word *shikast* (broken) became one of the key words of Persian poetry in India. Pages with *shikasta*, their lines thrown, as it were, over the page without apparent order, are often reminiscent of modern graphics rather than of legible script, and thus the aesthetic result of the most sacred, hieratic script, the early Koranic Kufi, and that of the extreme profane, poetical script are quite similar: one admires them without trying to decipher them. The poets then would claim that they wrote their letters in *khatt-i shikasta* [*shikasta* script] in order to express their broken hearts' hopeless state.[11]

The word *shikast* carried over to Urdu poetry as well. Discussing the poet Ghalib's (1797–1869) use of the word in Urdu, Aijaz Ahmad states that *shikast* was "also used for a note of music which does not agree or harmonize with the rest."[12] From the mid-twentieth-century perspective of an artist trained in calligraphy and familiar with post-cubist European art, the *shikasta* script held the potential to visualize an abstracted individuality. Tracing Sadequain's

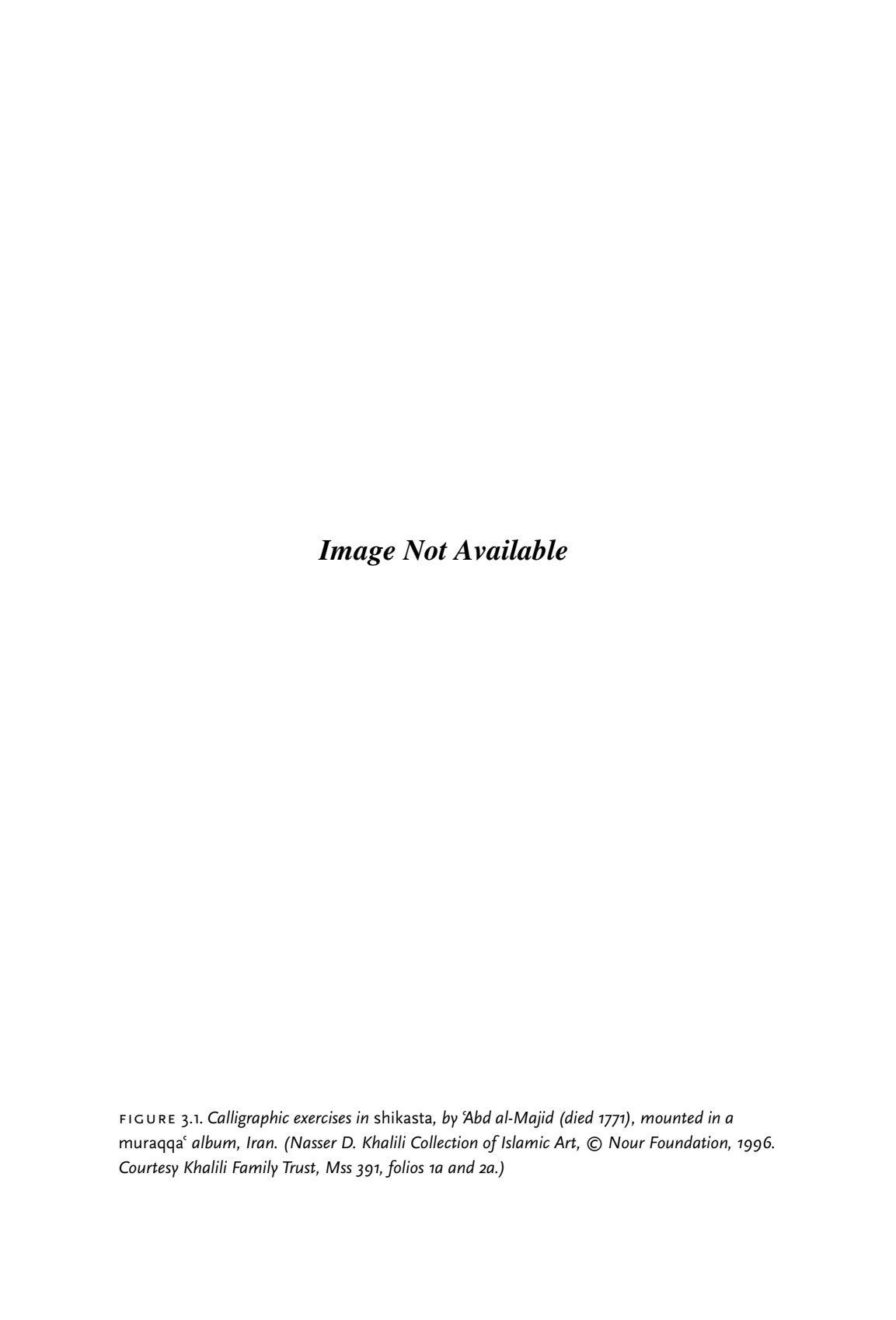


FIGURE 3.1. *Calligraphic exercises in* shikasta, *by ʿAbd al-Majid (died 1771), mounted in a* muraqqaʿ *album, Iran. (Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art, © Nour Foundation, 1996. Courtesy Khalili Family Trust, Mss 391, folios 1a and 2a.)*

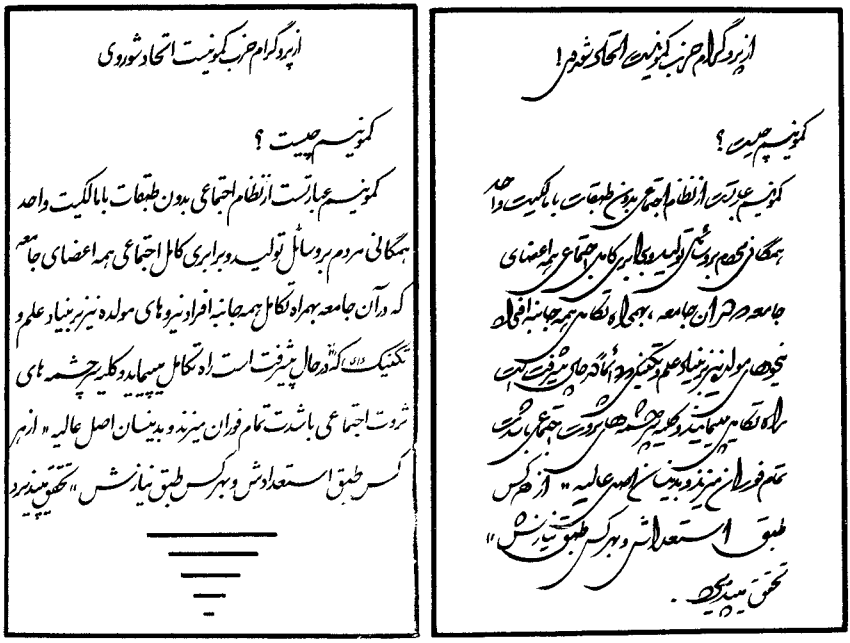


FIGURE 3.2. *Identical text in* nasta'liq *(left) and* shikasta *(right), in pamphlet "What Is Communism?," early twentieth century. (From William L. Hanaway and Brian Spooner,* Reading Nasta'liq: Persian and Urdu Hands from 1500 to the Present *[1995], example 56. Courtesy William L. Hanaway and Brian Spooner.)*

appropriation of *shikasta* makes visible another genealogy of individuation from early modern South Asia.

Yet another link between calligraphy and the depiction of a figurative subject appeared in the *hilya*, or the description of the physical attributes and moral character of the Prophet Muhammad. The standard classical form of the *hilya* was a written description, without recourse to pictorial depiction. But in later calligraphic experiments in this genre since the eighteenth century in Iran and Ottoman Turkey, a purely textual description was seen as insufficient. Thus, experiments included drawing indexical markers to the Prophet's personal possessions. A class of Safavid manuscripts called *Falnamas* (books of divination) also contains images in which calligraphy and ornament gesture toward depiction.[13] Persian poetry deployed tropes of Arabic letters to describe attributes of the beloved's face (Figure 3.3). Finally, calligraphy written in zoomorphic and other animate-shaped outlines had gained popularity since the sixteenth century (Figure 3.4).[14]

The late nineteenth century witnessed the rise of lithography and the pub-

FIGURE 3.3. *Annemarie Schimmel, drawing of human face made up of letters according to the usage of Persian poets. Schimmel notes: "After reading thousands of verses filled with this [lettrist] imagery, one is easily able to draw the picture of the ideal beloved of Persian poets as made up from letters." (From Annemarie Schimmel,* Calligraphy and Islamic Culture *[1984], 142.)*

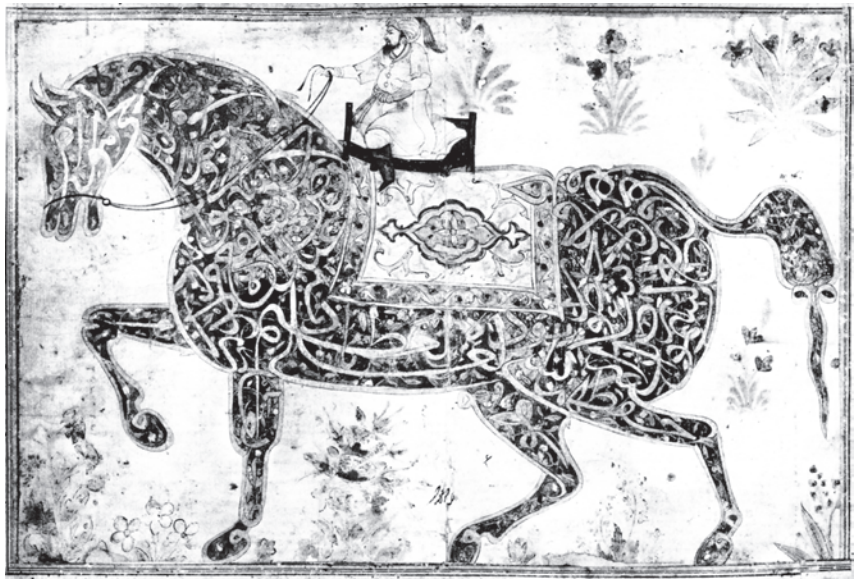


FIGURE 3.4. *Rider on an epigraphic horse, India, perhaps Bijapur, late sixteenth century. (From Anthony Welch,* Calligraphy in the Arts of the Muslim World *[1979], plate 77.)*

lishing of illustrated newspapers and books in Urdu, leading to a "print revolution" whose impact upon the relationships among illustration, calligraphy, and the reader has yet to be properly analyzed. Nineteenth-century popular Urdu illustrations and calligraphic techniques continued to draw upon the legacy of the precolonial era. For example, the lithographic portrayal of Ghalib owes a great deal of its pictorial convention to portraiture of Mughal nobility (Figures 3.5, 3.6). Moreover, the cover of the first year (1877) of the satirical Urdu serial *Oudh Punch* (modeled after the influential British pub-

Image Not Available

FIGURE 3.5. *Hashim,* Mulla Muhammad Khan Vali of Bijapur *(detail), Mughal period, ca. 1620, northern India. Opaque watercolor, gold, and ink on paper. 38.9 × 25.9 cm (with borders not shown). (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, purchase, Rogers Fund and the Kevorkian Foundation Gift, 1955 [55.121.10.34]. Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art.)*

FIGURE 3.6. *Lithographic portrait of Ghalib, probably late nineteenth century. (From Ralph Russell and Khurshidul Islam, trans. and ed.,* Ghalib, 1797–1869: Life and Letters, *vol. 1 [1969], frontispiece.)*

lication *Punch*) shows a "*hilya*" of Mr. Oudh Punch, describing his "character" in English ("Life Is Pleasure") and its Arabic equivalent "*ya latif*" (Figure 3.7).[15] And, rather than by typesetting, Urdu printing until the 1980s was largely accomplished by lithographing calligraphed originals, which meant that even when reading a prosaic item such as the daily newspaper, one was constantly reminded of the artisanal quality of the modern Urdu text. Traditional calligraphers also continued their specialized artistic practice, and biographical accounts from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries linked contemporary calligraphers with their illustrious predecessors (Figure 3.8).[16] Out of all the genres of "Islamic art," calligraphy ought to have come closest to attaining an individualized "artistic" status in the Western sense, in terms of possessing the sanction of elaborate biographical and authorial genealogy,

FIGURE 3.7.
"Hilya" of Mr. Oudh Punch, with letters forming the mouth, tongue, and eyes, on the cover of Oudh Punch, *1877. (From Archibald Constable,* A Selection from the Illustrations Which Have Appeared in the Oudh Punch from 1877 to 1881 *[1881], plate I.)*

an exalted social status, and conceptions of aesthetics in technical and transcendental discourses.[17] Ironically, however, because "Islamic art" was fashioned largely as an orientalist project, calligraphy's importance has not been central to the forging of the category of "Islamic art."[18]

From these admittedly limited examples, one can nevertheless surmise that the early modern era witnessed a growing emphasis on individualism, both in the sense of a personal subjective expression of the creator and in the sense of the greater possibilities of depicting an individual through representation. This dual emphasis is discernible in a variety of genres, even if this heightened attention to the individual was somewhat restricted by stylistic elaboration of Persianate motifs and although it varied unevenly, modulated as it was by various periods and styles.[19] This fitful process of individuation formed a crucially important genealogy for Sadequain's emergence as a modernist artist-subject.

THE URDU POETIC TRADITION

Sadequain's career marked a profound engagement with Urdu poetry, especially with the two most influential poets in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Ghalib and Iqbal (whom Chughtai had also engaged

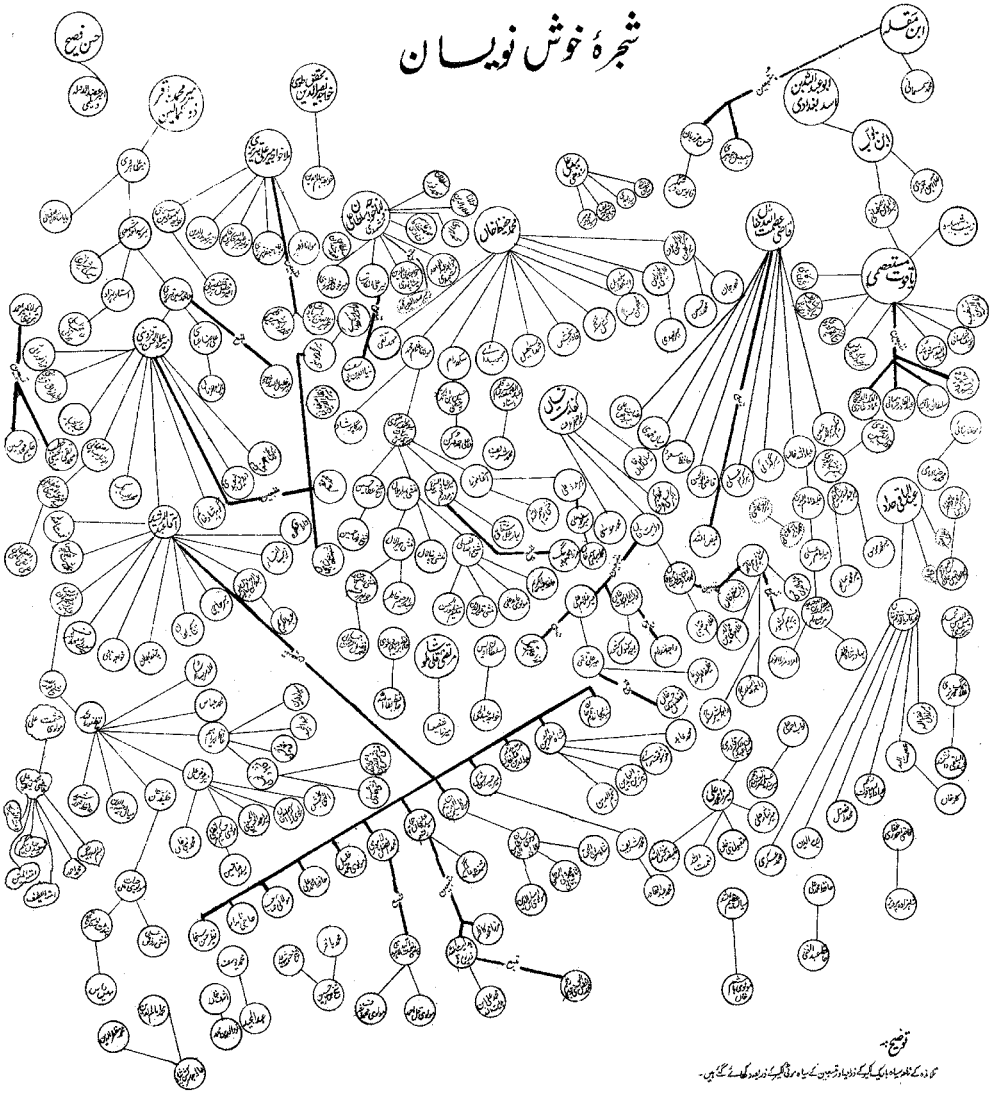


FIGURE 3.8. *Genealogical chart of calligraphers. (From Ihtiramuddin Shaghil,* Sahifah-yi khushnavisan *[1963], insert.)*

with earlier, as seen in chapter 1). Sadequain's illustrations of Ghalib's poetry, which he painted during 1968 and 1969, are discussed later in this chapter. Here a brief note on the poet's career and influence must suffice. Mirza Ghalib, the most philosophical of the classical Urdu poets, deployed the formal imagery of Urdu and Persian poetry in his own verse. Ghalib was associated with the court of the last Mughal emperor, Zafar (reigned 1837–58), whose

powers were almost entirely usurped by the British, reduced to a mere figurehead. Ghalib, living in Delhi, experienced the rise of British colonialism in India, interacted with British officials and bureaucracy during his life, and saw firsthand the terrible events during the Mutiny of 1857 that deeply altered the lifestyles of the cultivated [*ashraf*] elite with which Ghalib identified himself. His poetry, however, betrays no overt formal or literary reference to the colonial presence but is deeply immersed in the Indo-Persian poetic language, which had developed in premodern South Asia during the previous centuries. Ghalib was the last classical poet, after whom later Urdu poets could no longer ignore the aesthetic and social rupture introduced by colonialism and modernity.[20] Sadequain's murals and paintings of Ghalib's works instantiate an aesthetic that is influenced by both European post-cubist developments and the idea of subjectivity evoked by Iqbal's poetry.[21] To demonstrate this, it is necessary to briefly sketch Iqbal's ideas regarding the creative individual.[22]

According to an influential history of Urdu literature, "Iqbal is the hierophant of a new order. He made it his business to bring out the dynamic side of Islam just as medieval thinkers . . . stressed its pietistic and otherworldly nature."[23] In his poetry and writings, Iqbal foregrounded a philosophy of activism, developed from his deep engagement with European philosophy and from his own extensive knowledge of Islamicate and Persianate intellectual and cultural history.[24] In his writings, Iqbal developed an inspirational poetic and philosophical conception of "selfhood" [*khudi*]. Having studied with leading orientalists in India and with European philosophers at Cambridge and Heidelberg, Iqbal's later poetry addressed leading European intellectual currents of his time, in addition to being profoundly engaged with the legacy of Islamic philosophy and Sufism, which the poet strove to critique and reformulate.[25] The literature on Iqbal is vast; this chapter outlines only how Nietzsche's and Bergson's ideas shaped Iqbal's conception of intuition in the creative individual.[26]

Iqbal's activist subject, who is charged with revitalizing modern Islam, was arrived at partly by his reading of Nietzsche's superman, in conjunction with the medieval mystic Abd al-Karim al-Jili's conception of the Perfect Man [*al-insan al-kamil*].[27] Bergson's conceptions of intuition and evolutionism further provided Iqbal with a powerful aesthetic imagination of agency. But Iqbal's rendition of agency differed from those of Nietzsche and Bergson—articulating this "difference" in the translation of philosophical concepts is a necessary task that occupied Iqbal. Annemarie Schimmel—noting that "Iqbal him-

self has always maintained that the idea of the Perfect Man was Islamic, not Nietzschean[,] yet Nietzsche's superman may still have acted as an ingredient in the formation of Iqbal's ideas"[28]—has usefully summarized Iqbal's differences with Nietzsche, especially how the former envisions humanity's potential: "Iqbal's ideal man, the nearer he draws to God the more he surpasses the boundaries of normal—or accustomed to—men and unfolds all his internal powers. . . . Iqbal's Perfect Man is not the man without God, or who replaces a God 'Who has died' . . . but contrariwise the man who has fully realized his personal relation with the God with whom he lives, works, and talks. We are here not in the world of philosophy but in the tradition of the Islamic *insan kamil*, the Perfect Man of Sufism."[29] Iqbal claims that humanity's future development must encompass its spiritual aspect. This he finds lacking in Nietzsche.[30] Iqbal also rejects the latter's idea of Eternal Recurrence, stating that "life is no repetition of ever the same acts . . . but is fresh and surprising in every moment, creative and not bound by any iteration,"[31] an interpretation he arrived at from his reading of Bergson. As the historian Aziz Ahmad has pointed out, Bergson's philosophy of time and causation and open, dynamic possibilities for evolution in the future greatly appealed to Iqbal:

> Iqbal's view of evolution is [largely] dominated by an ethical sense of causation and purpose. Bergsonian evolutionism permeates his *Saqi Nama*[32] and other verses. Organic matter is distinguished from inorganic in direct statement and in imagery. *Elan vital* ascends the evolutionary spiral by progressing from the indetermination of lowly animal life to the status of man, and may evolve further to become the superman of the future or the "Perfect Man" of history. . . . Iqbal agrees with Bergson that life has chosen two different paths of evolution, instinct in animals and reason in man. The superman of the future may choose . . . a third path, that of intuition, which is the essence of instinct and the essence of reason. . . . The actual evolution of the superman outside the rank of the prophets may take some considerable time. But Iqbal's verse often refers to an unspecified "man of faith" (*mu'min*) who already exists somewhere on the road of moral evolution from man to superman. He is a person with a highly developed personality, or self. He is also described by the romantic, mystical term *qalandar* (a kind of itinerant monk who abandons everything and wanders in the world), as one of the features of his character is disciplined, but not ascetic *faqr* (a life of poverty with resignation and content). The *qalandar* or *faqir* cannot accept any charity, either spiritual or material. [Sadequain in his later career would refer to himself as a *qalandar* and a *faqir*.][33]

Iqbal's creative individual must ceaselessly master the potentials in space-time through developing selfhood [*khudi*] and intuition. Aziz Ahmad further explicates the role of intuition, which in Iqbal's thought is a higher faculty than logical reason:

> To explain the wisdom of the "man of faith" Iqbal distinguishes between two kinds of reason, dialectical and intuitional. Dialectical reason feeds upon itself; intuitional reason, which is the wisdom of the "man of faith," has angelic insight. With the "anguish of Adam's heart" it can assess the universe. It is not far removed from *ʿishq* or from intuition itself. Intuitional reason guides the creative faculty of the "man of faith" and posits, in terms of serial time, immortal thought and art. In the act of creation the "man of faith" absorbs time and space unto himself.[34]

Iqbal, however, also critiques Bergson's view of the development of future human possibilities as completely unconstrained and lacking any orientation. Iqbal declares that thought or intelligence leading to the future is impossible "without the presence of ends." But Bergson remains unaware of the potential for the development of "attentive consciousness" and its activity—in apprehending the past, in envisioning the future, and even in perceiving the present itself. The poet thus claims that Bergson outlines only a "partial view of intelligence," which, "as a spatializing activity . . . is shaped on matter alone, and has only mechanical categories at its disposal."[35] Further, Bergson's view that "the forward rush of the vital impulse in its creative freedom is unilluminated by the light of immediate or remote purpose" denies the "teleological character of Reality" on the grounds that a final purpose would restrict the possibility of creativity and freedom.[36] Instead, for Iqbal, the vector of future realization of greater human possibilities can be apprehended by the inner life of the man of action.

Undoubtedly, Iqbal's claim for the presence of the "attentive consciousness" reformulates older Sufi ideas. However, if, in emphasizing aspects of consciousness, his formulation here begins to approach the Hegelian emphasis on the dialectic of the ideal with reality, Iqbal seeks to also distinguish himself from Hegel by emphasizing the future as open and progressive: "Mental life is teleological in the sense that, while there is no far off distant goal towards which we are moving, there is a progressive formation of fresh ends, purposes, and ideal scales of value as the process of life grows and expands. . . . To endow the world process with a purpose in [a more determined] sense is to rob it of its originality and its creative character. Its ends are terminations of a career; they are ends to come and not necessarily premeditated."[37]

Iqbal furnishes his argument with a spatial metaphor: "A time process cannot be conceived as a line already drawn. It is a line in the drawing—an actualization of open possibilities. It is purposive only in the sense that it is *selective in character*, and brings itself to some sort of *present fulfillment* by *actively preserving and supplementing the past*."[38] Here, Iqbal signifies temporality via a selective process of drawing that includes and subsumes the past and the present. Interpreted literally, Iqbal's metaphor provides an uncanny insight into Sadequain's own modernist drawing practice based on Arabic calligraphy, as will be argued later.

Iqbal thus sought to effect a far-reaching and decisive influence on twentieth-century South Asian Muslim thought, whose latent and proleptic character critics recognized during Iqbal's own lifetime.[39] Through an appropriation and reworking of contemporary European philosophical thought and an activist reading of the Islamic past, Iqbal arrived at an aesthetic of a subject-centered Islamic modernity that is synthetic and dynamic in character. Iqbal's later poetry also persistently criticizes nationalism and cultural expression rooted in a specific space and time and emphasizes instead a nomadic, *qalandari* cultural dynamism that includes the need for new appropriations and synthesis, as well as an emphasis on movement and change, directed to higher individual and social ends. However, Iqbal's work has also been interpreted as including currents that run counter to his universalism, by his celebration of aspects of Muslim imperialism, Muslim exclusivity, and particularism. These have later provided ideological ammunition to the Pakistani state, especially during the rightist Islamic regime of General Zia ul-Haq during the late 1970s and 1980s—a time when Sadequain was fêted as a state artist.

Iqbal's influence on Sadequain from the beginning of the latter's career is evident in Sadequain's mural *Quest for Knowledge* (1959) for the Services Club in Karachi, which deploys a post-cubist visual language of angularity and the planar fracturing of images (Figure 3.9). In a horizontal space, riders holding a book, a bow and arrow, and a victory torch are mounted on three distinct horses, which feature clock faces in the place of their visages. Other animal figures and a long polymerlike molecule on the lower right supplement the composition. This painting is probably an early rendering of a couplet from Iqbal's poem "Qalandar's Character," from *Zarb-i kalim* (The Rod of Moses), his last collection of Urdu poetry:[40]

> The *qalandar* rules over [*muhasib*] the sun, the moon, and the stars.
> The *qalandar* is not the mounted by/ruled by [*markab*] Time, but rules over/rides [*rakib*] Time.

FIGURE 3.9. *Sadequain,* Quest for Knowledge, *mural painting, 1959. Oil on canvas. 130 × 356 cm. (Collection of the Services Mess, Karachi. Image courtesy Sadequain Foundation.)*

A similar work that Sadequain painted in 1977 as part of a series on Iqbal[41] corroborates this observation and provides an important comparative motif (Plate 12). This painting replaces the molecular structure with stars and planets—which are more faithful to Iqbal's verse—and, more significantly, depicts a single rider whose raised hand and finger sets a planetary system in orbital motion. Furthermore, the later painting is far more dynamic overall, and, significantly, the distinct and separate horses in the earlier painting appear to have morphed into a single horse, whose futurist movement-sequences appear as afterimages. The calligraphic quotation of Iqbal's couplet at the lower left completes the identification with the poet.

The extent of Iqbal's influence on Sadequain is not just limited to thematic illustrations of the poet's verses, however. Arguably, Iqbal made available for Sadequain an aesthetic of modernist subjectivity characterized by restlessness, struggle, and heroism.[42]

SADEQUAIN: EARLY YEARS

Sadequain was born in 1930 in Amroha, located approximately eighty miles east of Delhi, to an educated North Indian Shia family in which calligraphy was a valued skill. Details of his early life are unclear. He was apparently constantly engaged in sketching during his adolescence.[43] He passed his Matric (tenth grade) in Amroha and arrived in Delhi in 1944, where his brother was working for All India Radio. During this time, Air India Radio, under the direction of Ahmad Shah Bukhari Patras, was featuring the work

of noted Urdu writers and poets, to the degree that many prominent writers had moved from Lahore to Delhi.[44] Sadequain got a job at All India Radio as a calligrapher-copyist—he demonstrated his skills as a calligrapher by writing out a poem from Iqbal from memory—and he remained employed there until 1946. His job consisted of copying poetic selections for compiling dossiers of Urdu poetry to be used later by singers and other performers. Possessing a keen memory, he became very conversant with much of classical and modern Urdu poetry, memorizing a great deal of what he was copying. He also had the occasion to encounter major writers, such as Miraji, one of the founders of modernist [*jadid*] poetry in Urdu, whose singular, eccentric persona made an impression on Sadequain.[45] He apparently published his poetry in literary journals. It also seems that he was not wealthy enough to be able to obtain a university education in Calcutta, where he would have been exposed to the strength of Bengali intellectual culture and art.[46] Instead he graduated from Agra University in 1948, apparently as an external student.[47] Following the partition of British India in 1947, Sadequain moved in 1948 to Pakistan.[48]

The period between 1948 and 1955 is equally ill understood. Sadequain seems to have worked as an art teacher at an agricultural college from 1948 to 1951 and at Radio Pakistan between 1951 and 1952, but he abandoned employment to devote himself to his artwork, from that time on constantly engaged in sketching. From his extant work, it appears that he was quickly making his way through a bewildering array of visual registers—from realism, to late Bengal School, to abstraction, working in a variety of styles that he continued experimenting with until about 1960.[49] Unlike many other Westernized Pakistani artists who formulated their intellectual expression in English and who drew upon European modernism as a key artistic referent, Sadequain expressed himself primarily in Urdu throughout his life. This engagement with the Urdu language, which would become central to his artistic practice by the late 1960s, is already visible in his earlier works, such as *Awara* (ca. 1957), based on a famous poem describing urban alienation by the poet Majaz (1909–55), who had also been associated with All India Radio (Figure 3.10). Sadequain also befriended the East Pakistani artist S. M. Sultan (1923–94), who had arrived in Karachi in 1951, and the two artists spent much time together.[50] Sultan, who had earlier attended the Calcutta School of Art with the help of Hasan Shahid Suhrawardy, an art critic and member of the school's governing body, led a singular nonconformist life, eventually settling in a village in East Pakistan and adopting the ways of a Shivite ascetic. Sultan's nonconformist life has been a subject of fascination

FIGURE 3.10. *Sadequain,* Awara (Vagabond)*, ca. 1957, after Majaz's poem. Media and dimensions n.a. (Courtesy Sadequain Foundation.)*

on the part of many Bangladeshi intellectuals, and it undoubtedly influenced Sadequain's fashioning of his own social singularity.[51]

Sadequain's rise to extraordinary fame in Pakistan began in 1955, when he exhibited his works at the residence of Prime Minister Huseyn Shaheed Suhrawardy, a liberal patron of the arts and the brother of art critic Hasan Shahid Suhrawardy. Sadequain soon received a number of prestigious government mural commissions and also held numerous solo exhibitions of his work.[52] Many of his works from the later 1950s exhibit thematic rivalry with Zubeida Agha and especially with Shakir Ali,[53] whose mythological motifs Sadequain also adopted, along with influences from Matisse, Klee, Alberto Giacometti, Andre Masson, and, above all, Picasso, although he was initially able to see European modernist works only in reproduction. Because Sadequain was introduced to the visual languages of transnational modernism only indirectly—through magazine illustrations, for instance—he shows little fidelity to the distinctions among the various art movements like cubism, futurism, and surrealism. Rather, Sadequain's work drew freely from all of them, and for this reason the term "post-cubist" best describes the relationship between his work and transnational modernism—but in which the figure of Picasso begins to play a central role.[54]

A decisive development in the artist's mature imagery was precipitated during his stay at a rest house at Gadani, an arid, remote seaside location some distance from Karachi, where Sadequain recuperated from exhaustion around 1957. At Gadani, Sadequain encountered large, bushy cactus plants [*nag phani*] that grow in the area, whose long, thin, and prickly branches formed silhouettes suggestive of calligraphic forms (and also of the existential angst reminiscent of Giacometti's sculptures). Sadequain subsequently moved toward an imagery of exaggerated linearity in his work. The thorny character of the cactus emblemized violence, negativity, and darkness, which the artist also incorporated into his work. In an interview, he recognized the centrality of these forms to his work: "In the anatomy of these gigantic plants I found the essence of calligraphy. Everything that I have painted since then—a city like Rawalpindi, buildings, a forest, a boat, a table or a chair, a man, a mother and child, or a woman—has been based on calligraphy, which in itself issues from the structure of the cactus."[55] The transition is evident in works such as *Genesis: Lady amidst Mountain Cacti* (ca. 1957) (Figure 3.11), in which the woman's face and limbs are painted in a realist manner but the landscape around her and her sari have been fractured into thorny, angular planes. Transformed by his cactus epiphany, Sadequain's paintings of the late 1950s and early 1960s show his reworking of the modernism of the likes of Picasso and Matisse (*Anticipation*, *Bull in the Studio Mirror* [Figure 3.12]), Wilfredo Lam and the abstract expressionists like Mark Tobey, who emphasized linear, abstract calligraphy inspired by the Chinese script (*Group of Figures*, *Last Supper*), or a movement toward forms inspired by Arabic script (*Urban Landscape*, *Love Making*, *Composition in Kufi* [Figure 3.13]). This period also marks the beginning of Sadequain's exploration of the jagged, elongated figure (*Roots and Branches*, *Reclining Figure*, *A Person at Sandspit* [Plate 13])—which always references the artist himself and which becomes Sadequain's obsession during the later 1960s and 1970s. These self-portraits, along with Sadequain's murals (*Quest for Knowledge* [Figure 3.9]), begin to explore the imagery of movement and dynamism that marks the works of the later 1960s, including the Ghalib paintings from 1968.

Critics perceived Sadequain's freedom from adherence to a specific style, ideology, or artistic movement partly because Sadequain had formed his initial impressions of European modern art from magazine reproductions, in which the differences among cubism, fauvism, surrealism, and futurism—differences that were clear in Paris due to the works being placed in their "native" context—became far less significant in Pakistan. In Benjaminian fashion, the magazine layout, which reproduced images serially, helped de-

FIGURE 3.11. *Sadequain,* Genesis: Lady amidst Mountain Cacti, *ca. 1957. Oil on canvas. 181 × 90 cm. (Courtesy Sadequain Foundation.)*

FIGURE 3.12. *Sadequain,* Bull in the Studio Mirror, *1960. Oil on canvas. 86.7 × 115 cm. (Courtesy Wahab Jaffer Collection, a part of the Rangoonwala Collection.)*

FIGURE 3.13.
Sadequain, Composition in Kufi, *ca. 1961. Oil. Dimensions n.a. (Courtesy Sadequain Foundation.)*

contextualize the works from their adherence to specific schools, and this "mistranslation" freed the works to be perceived in the Pakistani context without their ideological baggage.[56] In any case, Sadequain, looking at these images in Karachi during the 1950s, would have had little concern for the manifestos, ideologies, and stylistic markers associated with the numerous European art movements during the first half of the twentieth century. Consequently, throughout his work from the later 1950s, European modernism appears before our eyes as pulverized and increasingly reconfigured within a calligraphic mold.

The large number of murals Sadequain executed between 1957 and 1961, and the even more monumental series of murals he worked on from 1967 until his death in 1987, reinforced the formation of the mythology of Sadequain as hero-artist. It may be noted that Ayub Khan's ascent to power in 1958 had brought a renewed importance to the role of national cultural management. Sadequain's earlier mural activities included the Karachi Airport Terminal (1957), a mural at Gadani titled *Smuggler* (1958) for the Customs Service, and the *Quest for Knowledge* (1959) mural at the Services Club discussed earlier.

The State Bank of Pakistan commissioned as many as ten murals from the artist during 1961. One of these is *Treasures of Time* (Figure 3.14), a long horizontal mural, which depicts the ascent of human intellectual life from earliest times.[57] Divided into three large groups of figures, the mural begins with an unnamed and faceless potter on the extreme left, followed by a group of nine figures consisting of eight Greek philosophers (such as Plato, Euclid, and Herodotus) plus Confucius. This is followed by four figures from the Middle Ages, including Dante, Leonardo da Vinci, and Galileo—and, for some inexplicable reason, the Buddha is also situated at the end of this first group. The second group consists of seventeen poets and intellectuals from the Islamic Middle Ages, such as Firdausi, Al-Ghazzali, Omar Khayyam, and Rumi, ending with Ibn Khaldun. Sadequain placed his own emaciated form among this group. The third group depicts European thinkers from the early modern and Enlightenment eras, including Shakespeare, Newton, Kant, Goethe, Marx, and Darwin, followed by the Indian poets Ghalib, Tagore, and Iqbal. The mural ends with a depiction of Einstein gazing beyond the confines of the canvas toward the right, accompanied by a clock and a rocket. Apart from the anachronisms of placing the Buddha and Sadequain himself away from their chronological locations, the organization of the last group, which depicts modern Western thinkers with modern South Asian poets, and which ends with the figures of Iqbal and Einstein, emphasizes the Iqbalian ideas

FIGURE 3.14. *Sadequain,* Treasures of Time*, mural (detail), State Bank of Pakistan, 1961. 2.4 × 18.6 m. (Collection of the State Bank of Pakistan, Karachi. Image courtesy Sadequain Foundation.)*

regarding the ascent of humanity and the nature of temporality as based on relativity and intuition, beyond strict linear accounting.[58] Based on Iqbal's poetry, the gigantic mural titled *The Saga of Labor*, created in 1967 at Mangla Dam in Pakistan, celebrates the elevation of humanity through labor and tool-making (Figure 3.15).[59]

THE SUPERHUMAN ARTIST

It has become virtually impossible to separate the factual biography of Sadequain from the myth of the detached, ceaselessly creative, Sufi-like persona, which the artist, the press, and the public all cultivated, thus creating an artistic hero for Pakistan. By the early 1960s, the recognition of Sadequain as a superhuman creator was already in place, as is evident from a catalog published in September 1961, after his first visits to London and Paris in 1960–61.[60] The writer and editor of an art journal, Yunus Said—who, according to Naqvi, only two years earlier had been deeply critical of Sadequain—observed in the 1961 catalog Introduction:[61]

> One can safely say that ever since the inception of Pakistan, there has never been an artist, so keen and so productive as Sadequain. With his

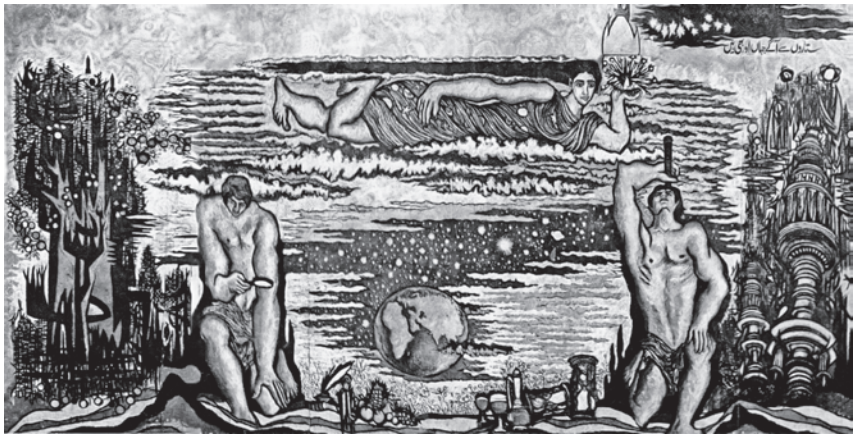


FIGURE 3.15. *Sadequain,* Saga of Labor*, mural (detail), Mangla Dam, 1967. 8.2 × 51.8 m. (Collection of the Water and Power Development Authority, Lahore. Image courtesy Sadequain Foundation.)*

indigenous, native cunning, his almost superhuman capacity for work and his compelling ambition, he arrived on the scene, from outside the merry-go-round, entirely on his own.

The road to recognition for Sadequain was a very hard one. He had no snob value, because he had not studied in any of those schools in Europe and America where most of his contemporaries had. He had never an opportunity to visit the galleries of Europe and see for himself the original works of masters whose genius he had accepted by proxy. He only saw their reproductions and tried to imagine and feel what the originals were like.

He was caught in a conflict. For Sadequain, the sub-continent, though immensely rich in other fields of creative art, had no tradition in painting. He intuitively declined the miniature, firstly because his talents demanded much bigger dimensions of space, much bigger brushes and knives and tubes of pigments, and secondly because it was impossible for him to arrest his growth and reduce himself to a mere illustrator. He wanted to create. So this one-man battle went on for a painfully long time. He worked feverishly, never allowing himself to be intimidated, and went the right way about it. He walked around with his sketching pad and pencil and pen and ink, and finished the whole pad, sometimes two, a day.

All this time he was alone. All this time he was being pointed out mockingly as a self-styled genius, as the proverbial frog who could not see beyond the pool that he was in.

It was a long and tedious way, no doubt, but it was not submerged in darkness, certainly not for Sadequain because he kept moving in the right direction. He went to Europe on his own wearing his "Sherwani" and baggy trousers, sold paintings and sketches in Paris and yesterday finished a huge mural 10′ × 65′ in the new building of the State Bank of Pakistan. He will do more murals in the same building in October and fly to Paris to attend the Bi-annual and then stay there till he has his one-man show.

It would be interesting to watch how Europe takes to him. One thing is certain, they will not ignore him.[62]

The expectation that Sadequain would create a memorable presence in the European art world is corroborated by a Paris-based critic, Barnett D. Conlan, who had met Sadequain in Paris earlier in 1961 when the latter had been invited by the French government to participate in the International Exhibition of Plastic Arts—the exhibition was postponed to later that year:

Unlike some of the contemporaries from Pakistan and India, Sadequain does not appear to owe very much to Western art, but stems directly from his own Muslim past and from the natural forms met with in the country around Karachi.

In the last decade or so art appears to have considerably changed in Pakistan. There is little in common between an artist like Chaughtai [Chughtai] who represented the revival of Pakistan art, of the beginning of the century and a young painter like Sadequain. In all his forms he goes back to the native calligraphy. The *Kufi* character [an Arabic script style] with the [*sic*] its remarkable beauty of abstract pattern would seem to be at the basis of his art . . .

One cannot label his work with any of the usual titles. He is not abstract although some of his large compositions inspired by the Kufi forms, came very near to it. Nor is he a surrealist despite the fantastic nature of many of his paintings. He belongs to no particular trend nor does he adhere to any theory or doctrine. He is a highly original artist who is inspired by the forms of nature which he sees around him. These he transforms into a world of his own by the force of his imagination. He is an excellent draughtsman able to delineate anything he sees and to draw profusely from his own imagination. . . .

During the short time he has spent with us here, the directors of the big museums as well as many galleries have taken great interest in his work. It is to be hoped that, at some future time, he will be able to return to Paris where he is almost certain to make a name.[63]

Clearly, by the early 1960s, critics were already perceiving Sadequain as pursuing a very different artistic project from that of Chughtai. Where the latter's style was seen as illustrative, Sadequain's was seen as painterly and colossal in scale and theme. And, unlike Chughtai, who cemented his status as a Muslim artist through his recourse to Mughal painting, Sadequain established himself as a Muslim artist through his reworking of calligraphic motifs into modernism. Unlike Chughtai, from the beginning of his career Sadequain wholeheartedly embraced transnational modernism, which had become a truly global currency by the mid-twentieth century. A negative "anxiety of influence" produced by Chughtai's presence must also be kept in mind when studying Sadequain's career. Being a generation younger than Chughtai, Sadequain's commitment to modernism corresponded with overall trends in South Asia in the 1950s. By the 1930s, the Bengal School was already being criticized as effete, decadent, and forcibly Indian.[64] Another solution to the problem of being a modern artist was needed, one that would go beyond the alleged superficial illustrative focus of the Bengal School. Moreover, Iqbal's uncertain position on the merits of the works of "today's Bihzads," and thus, by implication, on the art of Chughtai, might well have served as warning. Sadequain thus took up calligraphy in order to sidestep the towering but dated presence of Chughtai, renew a connection with Indo-Muslim heritage, and reckon with the powerful transnational phenomenon of post-cubist modernism. His move toward calligraphy is very evident in his 1966 drawings, produced during his Paris years.

PARIS YEARS, 1961–1967

Sadequain remained in Paris during the 1960s for many years, on occasion traveling back to Pakistan and to other parts of Europe. He initially came as the laureate winner of the Paris Biennial's "artist under 35" category in October 1961. He initially achieved some measure of success in Paris by staying on through a scholarship provided by the Biennial and subsequently traveling within Europe and to the United States during the early and mid-1960s, amid a busy schedule of exhibitions and commissions. He also continued to visit Pakistan, where, among other works, he executed a series of drawings for a book published in 1966 whose preface was contributed by the renowned Urdu poet Faiz Ahmad Faiz. By 1967 he had returned to settle permanently in Pakistan.

A significant reason for Sadequain's return to Pakistan was his growing difficulty in surviving in Paris as an artist, a fate increasingly shared by other

immigrant artists beginning in the later 1960s.[65] His difficulties are evident from a neglected but important documentary source—Sadequain's letters to his family, written during the period 1961–67, which he published in a small facsimile edition in 1979.[66] Overall, the letters are factual, event-based reports of his activities in Paris. Central threads running through the correspondence include his continued uncertain financial state; his meetings with patrons, dealers, and critics; his participation in exhibitions in various cities in France; his irregular dining habits; and reminiscences of his mother's cooking. The letters hardly ever articulate intellectual or aesthetic concerns, apart from reporting occasional participation in cultural activities. In their style and content, the letters are sober, prosaic, and unremarkable and are above all concerned with the level of prestige and the financial details of Sadequain's various career opportunities. Sadequain never discusses the imagery of his paintings, for example, but duly records the status of the exhibition site, patronage status, or the commission's symbolic import—especially appreciating support by Jewish patrons. Regarding his commission to illustrate an edition of Camus's *L'Etranger*, a project he considered important for his career and to which he devoted considerable effort and time, he never discusses aesthetic or social ideas from the novel that might have informed his illustrations.

It is clear from the letters from 1961 to 1964 that Sadequain achieved a fair degree of success in Paris. He participated in a number of group and solo exhibitions, was represented by a gallery, and found commissions and patrons that he considered significant for his career development. However, despite his bravado in the letters regarding his success in securing opportunities, there are ample glimpses of his difficulties, both financial and cultural, especially after 1963. In May 1964, he reported that he had no exhibition scheduled, which suggests waning interest in his work.[67] In February 1965, Sadequain wrote that his gallery had been sold because of the death of its financier and that the space would likely be converted to a bar.[68] In March 1965, Sadequain complained of exhaustion due to overwork and expressed his desire to visit Karachi, in order to rest and recuperate from the demanding Parisian life.[69] He reported on his daily struggle to learn the French language. In 1964, he mentioned in passing meeting two unidentified patrons and participating in writing *rubaʿis* (quatrains) in *shikasta* script in their company.[70] And in January 1967, Sadequain, in a rare comment about his artistic and intellectual explorations, remarked that he had been reading a lot lately and that he was feeling a new "inspiration" toward a new, socially progressive artistic form. Unfortunately, he does not flesh out the comment with any details.[71]

FIGURE 3.16.
Sadequain with his father, Sibtain Ahmed Naqvi, in Paris, 1967. (Courtesy Sadequain Foundation.)

In an afterword to the letters in 1979—more than a decade later than the letters in the collection—Sadequain narrated an account of his permanent return to Pakistan that turned on mere accident. He had executed a mural for the Paris office of Pakistan International Airlines in 1966, for which he was remunerated partly in the form of airline tickets. He had brought his father for a visit to Paris in 1967 (Figure 3.16). From Sadequain's description, it appears that on the way back to Karachi his father wished to visit Shi'ite holy shrines in Iraq, and he asked Sadequain to accompany and assist him during this visit. Sadequain's account begins by stating how it was by sheer chance that he returned permanently to Karachi:

> Father was in poor health during his visit to Paris. Still, he insisted that I continue with my plans to travel to another city in France, as I had to deliver a number of heavy portfolios of my work and attend an opening. Upon arriving at the train platform, I found out that the train was delayed. If the train had arrived on time, I would have occupied my seat and proceeded. While waiting, I became restless and decided that while exhibitions will continue to happen in future, it is not right for me to leave my father in ill health alone. I impulsively decided to accompany him to Baghdad. . . . The airline officials had assured me that they would escort my father to his home in Karachi. But the issue of visiting [*ziarat*] the holy shrines during the return journey from Paris remained unresolved. For this reason, I decided to accompany him through his *ziarat*, and then return to Paris

> from Baghdad. . . . On the second day in Baghdad, after being blessed by a *ziarat*, father was fully recovered. While his seat was being confirmed for his return trip to Karachi, he said, "Son! You have come as far as here [Baghdad], why not come along to Karachi?" and that is how I returned to Karachi with him.[72]

Sadequain ends the afterword in an exaggerated rhetorical flourish, describing his work upon his return to Pakistan as an artist rooted in his tradition. A simplified translation of the highly metaphorical language employed by Sadequain is offered here:

> The firm rules of my heritage and the natural disposition of this society, of which I am a member, forced a change of the direction of my work. This new direction somehow automatically reflected the hopes, aspirations, and sorrows [*shikast*] of this society. My work proceeded in new, experimental genres, impelled by new aesthetic criteria produced not by reason, but through a feeling of restless striving. The direction of my experiments led me to calligraphy and to the composing of *rubaʿis*. . . . I transcended beyond considerations of worldly fame and material wealth, and became completely absorbed in a divine quest towards establishing my presence in the realm of Art. . . . I do not regret spurning the [Parisian/internationalist] path. Had I continued traveling on it, I would have been only a short distance away from achieving international fame and great material success. Instead, I am contented to be blessed here with the opportunity to serve my people spiritually, by advancing Art in accordance with their legacy. That is why I believe that it was Divine providence that my father became ill in Paris.

The above passage from the afterword is significantly and self-consciously more figurative, using allusive metaphors and abstracted self-praise, indicative of the intensified post-Parisian self-construction of Sadequain, starting from 1967. The passage, which emphasizes his "restless striving" and his Sufi-like transcendence of worldly fame, is closer to Iqbal's formulation of the *qalandar* figure than to a diaspora artist from the Third World struggling for opportunities in Paris. Clearly, Sadequain, by claiming that abandoning the path of worldly fame was a sacrifice, glosses over the increasing difficulties he faced in Europe in securing opportunities during the later 1960s. Ironically, his growing fame in Pakistan during the 1960s was also due, in part at least, to his perceived success internationally. Sadequain was also deeply impressed by the monumental calligraphy on the Shi'ite shrines of Iraq. In

general, Sadequain's Shi'ite background, infused with the dramatic mythos of Husain's struggle at Karbala narrated in powerful elegiac Urdu poetic address such as the *marsiya*, also informs his later art.[73]

Paris during the late 1950s and early 1960s, amid the general atmosphere of decolonization, had become an important meeting center for postcolonial artists and intellectuals. Wilfredo Lam had developed a surrealist synthesis of cubism with Africana religions in Cuba during the 1940s. Other mid-twentieth-century movements had also developed in Paris, such as *lettrisme*, which emphasized the importance of textuality in painting. In its diasporic and transnational development, calligraphic modernism bears some correspondences with Negritude, a key movement of the transnational Black aesthetic. Zenderoudi, from Iran, a pioneering exponent of calligraphic modernism, began residing primarily in France in 1961. A member of a group of Iraqi impressionist painters that maintained extensive contacts with Western Europe during the 1950s, Shakir Hassan Al Sa'id, had visited Paris in 1956 on a scholarship. The Sudanese modernist Ibrahim El Salahi, whose work was evolving in a direction parallel to that of Sadequain, also exhibited in Paris during the early 1960s at the same gallery that showed Sadequain, although in separate exhibitions. In short, a number of artists from West Asia and North Africa began developing calligraphic paintings in the late 1950s—but not collaboratively or possibly without even knowing much about each other's work—creating an aesthetic of Muslim cross-national modernism that was larger than the individual iconography of any single nation-state. Indeed, by its referencing of the written word, this aesthetic opened itself to transnational Islamic discursive traditions.[74]

Unfortunately, no adequate records or images of Sadequain's paintings during his later Paris years have surfaced so far, but it is instructive for comparative purposes to look at the set of sixty pen-and-ink drawings executed and published in 1966 in a small booklet titled *Sadequain: Sketches and Drawings* (Figures 3.17, 3.18).[75] Many of the drawings depict the artist and other figures entangled in cobwebs, or with cacti forms sprouting from the artist's head and body. But the most interesting set consists of the artist depicted with a severed head, with a model in a studio setting. The fragmentation of the figure is clearly tied to Sadequain's deep fascination with the lives of transgressive Sufis, especially Sarmad, an enigmatic seventeenth-century figure, apparently of Armenian and Jewish background, who was associated with the Mughal prince Dara Shikoh.[76] He is reputed to have composed transgressive *rubaʿis* (quatrains), to have wandered around completely naked, and to have possessed miraculous powers. Upon Aurangzeb's ascension to the

FIGURE 3.17. *Sadequain,* Drawings of Artist and Model, *1966. Pen and ink on paper. Dimensions n.a. (Courtesy Sadequain Foundation.)*

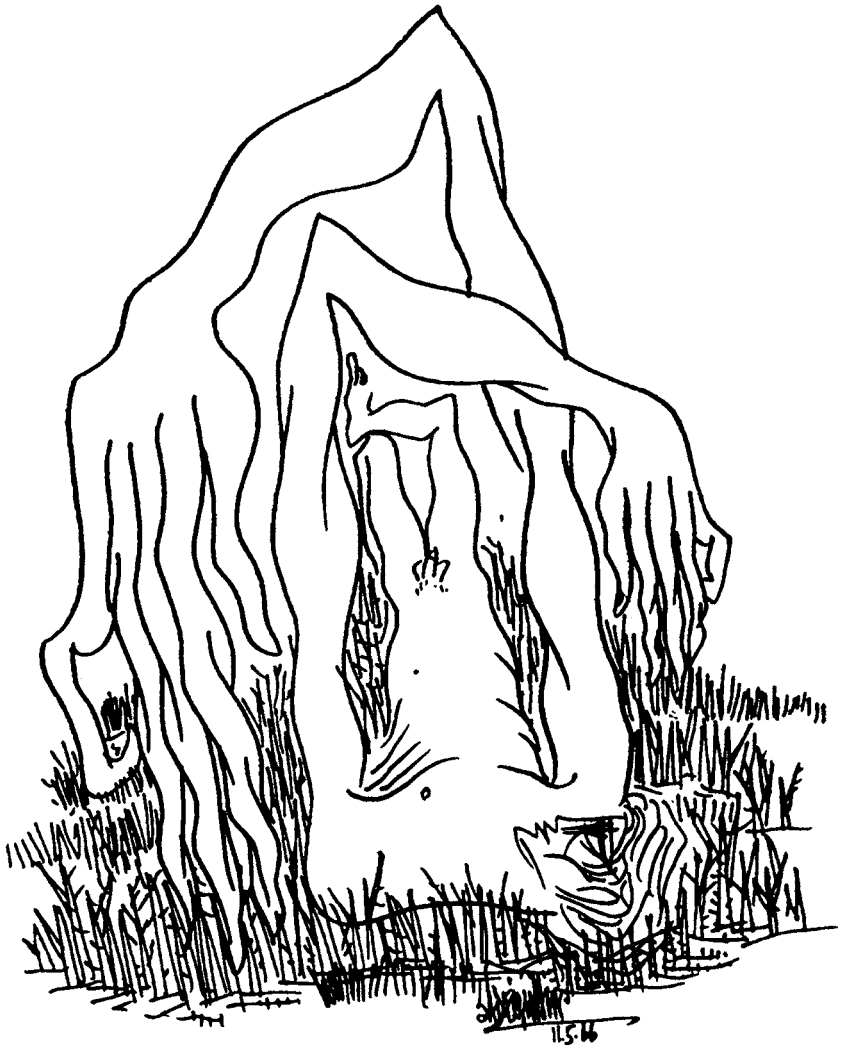


FIGURE 3.18. *Sadequain, self-portrait, 1966. Pen and ink on paper. Dimensions n.a. (Courtesy Sadequain Foundation.)*

Mughal throne after defeating Dara Shikoh, Emperor Aurangzeb is alleged to have found pretexts to execute Sarmad, which he was finally able to do on a charge of heresy. Upon his beheading in 1661, Sarmad's extraordinary spiritual power exhibited itself when the headless body began walking, carrying its severed head in its hands, until other Sufis begged the decapitated Sarmad to refrain from openly displaying such power.[77] Sadequain's subjectivity is enacted in these drawings via complex condensation of references to the trans-

Image Not Available

FIGURE 3.19.
Picasso, etching in Vollard Suite: Sculpteur et son modèle devant une fenêtre *[Sculptor and His Model in Front of a Window], March 31, 1933, plate 59. 19.3 × 26.7 cm. (© 2009 Estate of Pablo Picasso/Artist Rights Society (ARS), New York.)*

gressive subjectivity embodied by Sarmad, along with the mythos of Picasso, and, as Vazira Fazila-Yacoobali Zamindar has observed, might also have been charged by the release of feature films glorifying artistic genius—Van Gogh in the film *Lust for Life* (1956) and Michelangelo in *The Agony and The Ecstasy* (1965).

But, above all, the work engages with the body of Picasso's drawings and prints of the artist and the model, for example, in his illustrations of Honoré de Balzac's story, *The Unknown Masterpiece*,[78] the Vollard suite, a series of 100 etchings commissioned by Picasso's dealer Ambroise Vollard (Figure 3.19),[79] and his later drawings.[80] Sadequain's sketches clearly refer to Picasso but translate the artist-and-model genre into a calligraphic rendering. For example, in a characteristic self-portrait drawing from 1966 (Figure 3.18), his contorted fingers spell the word "Allah," a gesture Sadequain also performed in his photographic portraits. By engaging in a "unidirectional" dialogue, Sadequain claims the pedigree of European modernity to create for himself the subject position of a modern artist; and to stake this claim, who would be more appropriate to assume the role of the dialogic partner than the master of modernism, Picasso himself? Moreover, the artist-and-model genre foregrounds the nature of the self-reflexive question incessantly asked by the quintessential modern artist: What to paint and how?[81] These questions were immeasurably more difficult for a modernist artist from the periphery to answer. The subject that Sadequain locates in his own portraits is consequently both whole and split, created ex nihilo but immediately fragmented. The authentic modern artist, inserted within the mainstream of art history, finds himself always already dislocated. It is precisely this *staging* of the modern, as pointed out by Timothy Mitchell, "displayed and replayed through the time lag of representation," that affirms the importance of post-cubist modern art yet relays it in unexpected directions.[82] In the case of Sadequain,

it leads back to calligraphy and Urdu poetry via European modernity. Sadequain's prodigious output during the 1960s reveals a calligraphic language of figuration and abstraction that is as reminiscent of post-cubist European modernism as of an expressive stylization of the Arabic script. From the late 1960s onward, Sadequain stayed mostly in Pakistan, where, as a celebrity, he was patronized by the state and by the public. He continued to paint murals in government buildings all over Pakistan and some in India as well. Although the focus of this chapter is on Sadequain's Ghalib paintings, as will be discussed shortly, Sadequain also painted Iqbal's verses during the 1970s in a style similar to his murals (Plate 12).

NIAGARA OF PAINTING, 1967–1970

Upon returning to Pakistan, Sadequain immersed himself in a burst of frenzied activity that extended over a period of several years.[83] The journalist S. Amjad Ali's report, in the journal *Artistic Pakistan*, vividly conveys the impression Sadequain had produced upon the Pakistani art world during only a twelve-month period in 1968–69:

> This "year" has proved to be unusually productive in the life of Sadequain, even remembering that he is and has been for a long time one of the most prolific painters of Pakistan.
>
> He has always been obsessed with the idea of coming as close to the people as possible, and he has used every opportunity of bringing his art right where the people are—in exhibition grounds, in libraries, at airports, and at great engineering works like the Mangla Dam, which constantly attract visitors. In the Panjab University he painted a large mural free just because he did not want to miss the opportunity of gaining intimate access to the life of the young folk and was prepared to overlook the fact that the University did not have the resources to commission him for the work.
>
> It was this same desire that led him to set up a private art gallery of his own on Strachen Road in Karachi. He wanted a place where he could place his offerings before the public as often as he liked and for as long as he liked—or the public wanted. Having acquired the place, he set to work with demoniac energy, and early in August put on display the work done by him in July. From then on a Niagara of paintings continued to flow from his studio situated upstairs, almost at the rate of a painting a day, and every month he held an exhibition of new work that dazzled and dazed the art

lovers of the country. There were those who doubted if he could keep it up for long but he did it for five months at a stretch and then withdrew from the public eye for a while to undertake the stupendous task of painting more than a score of new paintings for exhibition during Ghalib week in Karachi. The last exhibition happened to coincide with Ramazan or the month of fasts and it was presumed that this would mean an inevitable break in his artistic activity[,] for display of mundane paintings during the holy month would have been frowned upon. . . . This however was just the opportunity that Sadequain was looking for to prove that art was a part of life and [that] there was a sacred side of it as well as a profane. He produced something for the occasion that proved to be a historic departure in the art of Pakistan—namely large oil paintings exploiting only the beauty of Quranic verses written in Arabic calligraphy. . . .

After this came a brief lull—for the public but not for the artist—and then he went into hibernation to perform another tremendous feat by painting large canvases to illustrate Ghalib's verses, and to donate half of them all to the sponsoring institution. . . .

Thus ended this most eventful and fertile period of twelve months in the artistic life of Sadequain—surely a most impressive and dazzling display of creative power ever seen in this country.[84]

Sadequain's relentless productivity continued through the early 1970s. He published a volume of over a thousand *rubaʿis* (quatrains) of his own composition in two editions, written in the short period between September 1969 and January 1970, according to his note on the title page.[85] He himself calligraphed the *rubaʿis* and illustrated one edition of the *rubaʿis* to produce a printed version of a type of *muraqqa'* album, one in which image and text forge an integral connection (Figure 3.20).

Ghalib's poetry is notable for its distinctive and pronounced use of metaphors deploying calligraphy, writing, and depiction, beginning with his *divan*'s celebrated first verse and worked out in a variety of sophisticated metaphors throughout his poetry.[86] Turning now to the Ghalib paintings (Plate 14, Figure 3.21), this chapter argues that Sadequain executed them in a visual style that acknowledges the force of Iqbalian subjectivity. The comparison with Chughtai's *Muraqqaʿ-i Chughta'i*, examined in chapter 1, was evident to critics at the time the work was first exhibited, as is seen in critic S. Amjad Ali's report:

Abdur Rahman Chughtai's charming water colour studies in the miniature style were done in the 1920's and when they were published in book-form

FIGURE 3.20. *Sadequain, illustration and calligraphy of his own verses. Dimensions n.a. (Courtesy Sadequain Foundation.)*

in 1929 [refers to the *Muraqqaᶜ-i Chughta'i*, published in 1928], they were a major event in our world of art and culture. . . . Now after 40 years another artist has come forward to match his imagination with that of the great old master. What a world of difference between the old artist and the new! Chughtai was working like a jeweller, meticulous in detail, exquisite in workmanship. His temper was sweetly romantic, colourful and poetic. Sadequain was working on a quite different plane and in a different technique. He was more like an iron-smith, and his thick black line was like an iron bar that was powerfully turned and twisted by the artist into gigantic shapes and forms, some familiar, some strange and mystical and awe-inspiring. The technique is crude and vigorous. The atmosphere is

FIGURE 3.21. *Sadequain, painting based on Ghalib's poetry, 1968. With calligraphy by Sadequain. Oil on canvas. Dimensions n.a. (Courtesy Sadequain Foundation.)*

heavy with tragedy and the air of doom. The overall impression is that of something dark and dramatic, colourless and sombre. The sweetness of old has given way to the bitterness of a troubled soul, the assurance of familiar things is replaced by vague premonitions and apperceptions of cosmic realities. Instead of rendering the images of the ghazal literally, the artist translates and projects it on the cosmic plane.[87]

The imagery of many of these paintings, which depicts temporality and process by foregrounding the brush, the pen, the act of writing and painting or the circular movement of objects and time by cyclical lines, differs greatly from Sadequain's earlier paintings, which were marked by a relative stasis. For example, consider the painting (Plate 14) depicting the following couplet from Ghalib's *divan*:

dard-i dil likhun kab tak janun un ko dikhla dun
ungliyan figar apni khama khun-chakan apna

How long would I write the pain of the heart? I might as well go and show her instead
My wounded fingers, my blood-dripping reed-pen.[88]

Sadequain renders this as a self-portrait similar to the 1966 drawing (Figure 3.18), but here the hands of the artist write/paint the text/painting by using the blood emerging from the bloodied fingers of the subject itself, creating an autonomous and self-referential image of tortured subjectivity. Throughout the series, Sadequain plays out Iqbal's characterization of the *qalandar* as a restless, superhuman creator, with the artist himself exemplifying this character. Another verse by Ghalib suggests that art itself, and especially painting, is merely an excuse for a meeting with the beloved.

sikhay hain mah-rukhon ke liye ham musavviri
taqrib kuchh to bahr-i mulaqat chahiye

For the moon-faced ones, we've learned painting
Some pretext for the sake of a meeting is needed.[89]

Sadequain interprets this verse by not simply showing "moon-faced" beauties alone. Rather, a group of three graceful women attend to a central, grotesque, bestial female figure, which the artist is engaged in painting instead of the beauties (Figure 3.21). If one understands the *ghazal*'s beloved here as a complex metaphor of longing, Sadequain suggests that his art seeks an encounter

with society, even when the social field itself consists of unspeakably ugly elements.

SADEQUAIN'S POETRY

Sadequain wrote a large number of *rubaʿis* in a burst of activity during a few months during 1969–70. These were issued in a calligraphed edition in May 1970 and then reissued in a rearranged and revised edition framed by drawings in September 1971. A new set of *rubaʿis* titled *Biyaz-i Sadiquaini* was also issued in September 1971, which contained a long preface explaining the genesis of his poetic compositions and addressing controversies surrounding the other two editions.[90] All these volumes were self-published. Well aware of the difficulty in writing *rubaʿis*, which had challenged even the most accomplished poets, Sadequain was nevertheless impressed primarily by the examples of Omar Khayyam and also by the *rubaʿis* of Sarmad. Acknowledging his narcissism, Sadequain insisted that the *rubaʿi* form is essentially autobiographical, which was precisely its appeal for him.[91]

Sadequain begins both editions of the *rubaʿis* with a verse from Iqbal and then addresses various subjects organized in ten sections. One key subject is his repeated focus upon what the object of painting might be and how visual representation remains inadequate to the task of depiction. Another theme is his anxiety-filled attempt to situate himself in a distinguished lineage of Indo-Persian culture. Acknowledging his lack of skill and training in the poetic tradition, Sadequain sees himself as a modern intruder in the universe of poetry (Figure 3.22):

> He is disruptive, why has he come here?
> He is restless, why has he come here?
> Khayyam asked Sarmad
> Why has Sadequain come to our neighborhood?[92]

By foregrounding his presence in the poetic-artistic-Sufi tradition by the emblematic citation of the mythical painter Mani,[93] Omar Khayyam, the poet Urfi, the calligrapher Yaqut (al-Mutaʿsimi [died 1293]), the mystic Sarmad,[94] and the painter Bihzad (discussed in chapter 1), Sadequain self-consciously addresses the existential problem of how to include his own persona as a co-contributor to classical Indo-Persian intellectual history, while straining toward a modern subjectivity enacted by visual art. On the one hand, Sadequain's *rubaʿis* are deeply learned in the sense of being aware of the *rubaʿi*

FIGURE 3.22. *Sadequain,* Who Is Sadequain? Khayyam Asks Sarmad, *from the series,* The Artist and the Muses, *1970. Pen and ink on paper. Dimensions n.a. (Courtesy Sadequain Foundation.)*

tradition and its criticism in Urdu.[95] On the other hand, unlike the refined elegance of Khayyam's skeptical verse, the mood of Sadequain's *ruba'is* is informal, even base:

> Again you admitted your love, your desires
> Your lips a flower, your cheek a mirror
> Before all else on your arm
> I kissed the scars left by a hypodermic needle.[96]

The morbidity and directness of much of this poetry recalls the mood of Baudelaire's *Les Fleurs du mal* (The Flowers of Evil) and his foundational essay on modernity's aesthetic, "The Painter of Modern Life," which evokes the transient beauty of modernity. Sadequain's decadence was, however, also mobilized by the transgressive Sufi tradition of nonconformism:

> O [outwardly respectable and conformist] folk who are clothed, among you
> I am utterly [and publicly] naked, like the letter *alif*.[97]

By the early 1970s, the artist had exhausted his imagination, and figurative works done since that time basically repeat the motifs he had developed earlier. As curator Salima Hashmi has observed, "The agitated pace at which he worked throughout his life, left little time to look back critically at what he was doing."[98] Many critics evaluated Sadequain's turn to Qur'anic calligraphy negatively in relation to his earlier work, and for the same reason the 2003 Sadequain retrospective in Karachi significantly omitted all of his Qur'anic calligraphies.[99]

SADEQUAIN AND MODERNISM

"Modern art acquired, so to speak, a characteristic grammar. This 'grammar' had to be used, or at least in some way evoked or nodded towards; otherwise whatever you tried to say would not be in the forefront. . . . Paris had a trump card. Paris was where the dictionary was written. More particularly, as far as developments in the early twentieth century are concerned, Paris was where Cubism emerged."[100] In this quotation, art historian Paul Wood outlines the reasons why early twentieth-century European movements have continued to be understood in the context of what is alleged to be a "cubocentric" art history.[101] If all the other early twentieth-century European avant-garde movements—which arguably had a much stronger relationship to various regional and national artistic modernities—were compelled to settle their accounts with cubism, surely one should expect nothing less in the postcolonial environment of the newly independent state of Pakistan, which at that time had a far more tenuous relationship to industrial modernity and very weak institutional support for art.

We have seen how Sadequain's work translates the classical, the poetic, and the textual into the visual. The Indo-Muslim cultural milieu with which Sadequain identified himself had traditionally privileged language and poetry and did not accord the visual artist the elevated, sophisticated, and complex role available to the poet. The poet of the classical Indo-Islamic culture was able to draw upon a highly refined symbolic vocabulary capable of expressing the experiences of private doubt, skepticism, and desire in linguistic and imagistic tropes.[102] The poet was a "subject," unlike the producer of craft or even architecture. The calligrapher, however, enjoyed a more elevated role.[103]

Sadequain relays this textual and discursive legacy into the visual by his own poetic compositions, discussed above, and also by renderings of Ghalib's poetry. This open experimental phase of Sadequain lasted until the early 1970s, after which he was increasingly seen as the national artist par excel-

lence, primarily on the basis of his calligraphy and the consciously "Islamic" character of his work. Sadequain as a modernist artist-subject was now situated on a national platform, rather than on the Parisian/international circuit or even as a private individual artist. His predicament between assuming the role of an artist-creator on a universal plane and an artist engaged with national specificity and cultural particularity mirrors the impasse Iqbal faced earlier in his conception of the *qalandar*-creator as a universal or pan-Islamic figure and the practical necessity of embedding the South Asian Muslim community in the framework of national boundaries. Although Iqbal was scathing in his criticism of the nation-state formation, he suggested the idea of political autonomy for Muslims as a necessary safeguard for their interests, as a people who were economically backward and in a minority. This contradiction parallels the more powerful, if invisible, contradiction implicit in modernism as well—that is, modernism is characterized by universal claims, yet its most authentic expression is allegedly found in its most advanced and particular form across the North Atlantic.[104]

Nevertheless, even if not fully universal, calligraphic modernism draws new links among the shared conceptions of a large region. By virtue of the Arabic script, calligraphic painting generates a reference to textuality that acknowledges the force of discursive and institutional authority. Unquestionably, this past does undergo a discursive rupture under the force of colonialism and modernity,[105] but its partial recovery and its genealogical relay into the present is enacted here through artistic practice: calligraphic experimentation with modernism acknowledges the persistence of the textual past, but this is now abstracted, opened to a dialogue with metropolitan artistic languages, and thereby becoming more global in scope.

Starting in the late 1960s, Sadequain increasingly turned to pure Qur'anic calligraphy, a direction that received great impetus in the mid-1970s, beginning with the "Islamic socialism" of Z. A. Bhutto and continuing on in the regime of General Zia ul-Haq, which promoted the works of others such as Ibn-i Kalim,[106] a Multan-based calligrapher who has documented the lives of recent practitioners of calligraphy in Pakistan and who has claimed to have developed a new style of calligraphy.[107] The 1971 dismemberment of Pakistan seems to have caused no overt response in Sadequain's work. But the artist's turn to Qur'anic calligraphy and the increasing aggrandizement of his national persona in the 1970s may well have functioned as a compensation against the severe damage done to the idea of the Pakistani nation-state entailed in the loss of East Pakistan. In any case, the subjectivity of Sadequain as a heroic artist was now increasingly predicated upon the nation-state. His

later work, as exemplary of an overtly "Islamic" art, was pressed into ideological service of Bhutto's government and the regime of General Zia ul-Haq, the promoter of Islamization in Pakistan at the state level since the late 1970s. Sadequain's later work greatly suffered from repetition and careless execution.[108]

Along with his murals, Sadequain's popular calligraphic exercises may also be seen as an attempt to create an art form with broader appeal. He was chosen for numerous grandiose state commissions, and the singularity of his persona intersected oddly with the state and the public. Since he was allied with no other artist or social or political movement, bureaucrats and officials in the evenings could safely bring him gifts of alcohol in exchange for spontaneously executed drawings, which included scandalous figurative work, including nudes.

The very singularity of Sadequain, which allowed the artist to break norms, also limited him, as these transgressions could be largely confined to his own persona by an increasingly conservative and rightist state ideology. A tense, yet productive, relationship ensued between Sadequain's status as a socially transgressive figure and his calligraphy deployed in relation to Islam as state ideology. This tension is evident in the description by Indian artist Maqbool Fida Husain of his meeting with Sadequain in India in 1981. Sadequain drew two semicircles with dots at their centers. He then proceeded to render them as breasts of a female figure but also to incorporate them, as the Arabic letter *nun*, into the Qurʾanic phrase *ʿain al-yaqin* (the Witnessing of Truth).[109] This tension finally exploded into the open during 1976, when the artist's exhibition of figurative work was subject to heated dispute in the Punjab Parliament; several works were eventually destroyed in a bomb attack on the show. Yet the very same Islamic political groups leading the charge against Sadequain had earlier printed Sadequain's calligraphic works in their newspapers as a model to be followed, exemplifying the liminal inside-outside status of Sadequain in relation to statist Islamic ideology.[110]

But even the 1976 events led to no sustained changes in the artist's work. The focus of Sadequain's works remained his own subjectivity, increasingly realized at the cost of repetition and indifferent execution.[111] Sadequain's self-assessments betray a sarcastic awareness of his own compromises. For example, in a grandiose but deeply ironic anti-Sufi statement at the end of his life, he proclaimed, "By the grace of Allah . . . [I have] . . . a glorified, gratified ego, well-massaged with the oil of praise. When the ego is glorified, you are at peace psychologically."[112] The oil of praise was used liberally by the state during the late 1970s and 1980s, continuing up until his death in 1987. But it

may be noted that even in his later years Sadequain never created works that function as instruments of propaganda for Islamization, and, in this sense, it would be misleading to view him as an artist merely working on behalf of the state. Instead, his singular persona continued to serve as a reminder of the personal, sexual, and Sufistic surplus that could not be contained in Zia's coercive and austere Islamization project. "Politics proper," observes philosopher Slavoj Žižek, "always involves a kind of short-circuit between the Universal and the Particular: the paradox of a singular which appears as a stand-in for the Universal, destabilizing the 'natural' functional order of relations in the social body."[113] The scandal that Sadequain embodied was not simply due to public exhibition of his transgressive persona, but it occurred precisely because his singularity became representative of the nation itself, immanently threatening to unravel official Islamization from within.

Sadequain was innovative and indeed highly successful in expanding the audience for his work, a task he was engaged in until the end of his life. He had executed a few murals before his return to Pakistan from Paris in 1967, but the gigantic Mangla Dam mural, which he painted in 1967, was the beginning of an intensified period of mural-painting activity at prestigious public sites all over the country. He pursued this work until his death. As early as 1969, Sadequain, stating that his work was meant for "the people," declared that he would no longer sell his paintings to individual patrons: "My paintings are not meant to be kept in the houses of some rich social snobs and be seen by only a few persons who may know nothing about art. I do not want somebody just to boast that I have a Sadequain. I want, instead, that my paintings should be seen by the largest number of people," a policy he managed to sustain for some two decades.[114] A much larger audience than the usual gallery visitors began to view his paintings of Qur'anic passages. Sadequain also experimented with showing his work in unusual venues, including exhibiting his Qur'anic verses on sidewalks and displaying his paintings in an industrial area in Karachi, with the intent that they would be viewed by poor laborers.[115]

The shift from gallery representation during his Paris years to his status as a national artist with state patronage might have been detrimental to Sadequain's artistic integrity, yet it also allowed him to create a wider addressee, one that was not previously invested in the visual arts. The unsettled and shifting status of patronage and addressee so evident in Sadequain's career also marks key facets of his modernity. Sadequain's public interventions are more conservative than those made by Zainul Abedin. The latter, who organized participatory exhibitions and artistic projects during the late 1960s and

early 1970s, offers a pointed contrast with the absolute control Sadequain's "genius" exercised over his public work. Nevertheless, the socially committed landscape and pop artist Ijaz ul Hassan (born 1940) has aptly noted: "Sadequain usually refrained from clearly identifying himself with any political ideology or movement. . . . As an artist, however, he never hesitated to glorify the inherent strength and creative spirit of man, and his ability to build a better world. . . . As a painter, Sadequain was the first to have liberated painting from private homes and transformed it into a public art."[116]

This chapter has traced Sadequain's subject formation as an artist and its relationship to a longer historical process in which Muslim intellectuals attempted to produce an aesthetic and a practice of Islamic modernity by selective appropriation of the past and the present. Sadequain's reworking of the classical Indo-Persian discursive and calligraphic legacy is exemplary of a larger movement toward the rearticulation of a transnational modernist art since 1955 by artists from various locations in the Muslim world. However, his work also reveals the impasses both "Islamic art" and modernism face, a complex and problematic relationship to gender and an avoidance of social address—a limitation that Sadequain sincerely attempted to face. Other artists from the 1980s to the present have sought a renewed and more direct relationship between art and the social world. Rasheed Araeen, based in the United Kingdom, strategically adapted Islamic art to critique themes of racism and internal colonization by Muslims in South Asia and in England. Naiza Khan has persistently opened up questions of gender in relation to Islamic discursive traditions, as examined in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4 EMERGENCE OF THE PUBLIC SELF

RASHEED ARAEEN AND NAIZA KHAN

The mid-century development of modernism in Pakistan moved artists toward an exploration of the complexity of inwardness and the dilemmas of subjectivity of the postcolonial era. During the late 1960s and 1970s, however, artists Sadequain and Zainul Abedin initiated the project of engaging with the public. The radicalization of the late 1960s had a sharper effect in shaping the career of Rasheed Araeen, an artist who was born in Karachi but moved to London during the early 1960s. Exploration of issues of gender, which had also gathered momentum during the 1970s and 1980s, and the public contestation between Islamization and feminist activism in Pakistan during the 1980s forms the conceptual backdrop to the works of Naiza Khan, executed from the 1990s to the present. This chapter examines the persistence of questions of subjectivity in a selection of the artists' work, arguing that it forms strategic and fragmentary genealogical links with "Islamic art" and other discursive traditions, even while recoding them toward an engagement with the body and with issues of the psyche shaped by racism and patriarchy. Rasheed Araeen's work, primarily deploying the Urdu script since the 1980s, reformulates calligraphic modernism toward self-critique. Naiza Khan, since the 1990s, persistently allegorizes gendered Muslim identity in South Asia since the later nineteenth century in a manner that opens up this tradition to new questions regarding the body.

The artists come from different generations, but they are both better characterized as *contemporary* than as modernist—and they accordingly work in a variety of media other than painting, deploying unorthodox approaches and media, including performance, installation, and photography.[1] More important, their work powerfully underscores aporias of the self and the social.[2] These new materials and conceptual languages allow for a more direct and intensified engagement with the social than was possible with high modernism and is also effected by their drawing from, and critically intervening in, the realm of urbanized popular cultural forms in Karachi. Modernism had largely eschewed engagement with the temporality of the present. Rather than inhabiting a particular social landscape or engaging with immediate events, it offered instead metaphoric alternatives to the world outside the

studio. By contrast, *contemporaneity* is immersed in a powerful sense of a temporality that encompasses the immediate present but also extends over personal and social dilemmas condensed over the course of the twentieth century. Contemporaneity as an artistic modality brings new valences to the works' legibility. The contemporary work of art, unlike the modernist, resolutely offers no transcendence and no attempt to redeem events and crises into a utopian metaphor. Rather, it insistently maps the multiple dislocations and antinomies of the social field. Contemporary practice also powerfully offers new ways of imagining the self and its locale as situated in place, yet is open to transnational exchanges and resolutely refuses all claims to authenticity. Nevertheless, the very seriousness of this work also relays and transforms modernism's abiding concerns with subjectivity and tradition into the present. In this sense, both artists are exemplary of critical contemporary art practice, which needs to be understood in multiple and overlapping, yet specific, historical trajectories, rather than being located simply in an ahistorical, homogenized and spectacular postmodern globalist realm.

RASHEED ARAEEN

Born in Karachi in 1935 and based in London since 1964, Rasheed Araeen is a pioneer of minimalism in sculpture.[3] He is distinctive in many ways, not least because his formalism cannot be separated from his political and social engagement. His work since the late 1950s bears values of becoming, movement, and equality, which he later further developed with reference to his activism. Araeen has been deeply involved with other artists and collectives since the early 1970s and has been persistently critical of structures of white domination that have rendered nonwhite artists marginal and invisible with respect to mainstream modernism. By the late 1960s, Araeen was thoroughly politicized by the institutional racism of the art establishment in Britain and by the wider issues of race, class, and the global perpetuation of Western imperialist legacies. As a theorist and supporter of the Black Arts movement in Britain during the 1980s, Araeen, along with others, forcefully confronted the institutional racism and Eurocentrism of metropolitan modernism. Informed by the legacies of Marx and Frantz Fanon, he has written a series of manifestos, essays, and observations about his own practice and about the larger questions of the role of a critical modernism in relation to Eurocentrism, commodified global art practices, the superficial acknowledgment and management of difference by Western postmodern multiculturalism, and the precarious situation of modern art in places such as Africa and

Asia. He founded the journal *Third Text* in 1987, based on an earlier effort, *Black Phoenix*, which was issued in 1978, and which remains one of the most important platforms for articulating a transnational conception of modernism from a variety of critical perspectives. In 1989—the same year that the Paris exhibition *Magiciens de la Terre* (in which he participated) inaugurated the current era of spectacularized globalization of contemporary art[4]—he curated a major exhibition, *The Other Story*, at the Hayward Gallery in London. This exhibition, at a major public gallery, showcased and documented the work of a whole generation of innovative artists from Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean who had settled in Britain but who were excluded from the story of modernism by their being seen as exotic others.[5]

Araeen is thus a multifaceted figure, one who has eloquently and reflexively addressed his own art in a series of essays and interviews. Influential critics have also addressed key dimensions of his artistic and critical practice in a series of essays.[6] This chapter seeks to analyze only one aspect of his work—one that has not been fully addressed by his critics as yet—his use of "Islamic" and Muslim South Asian tropes and forms in relation to artistic subjectivity in some of his works since the early 1980s. I argue that the political and social transformations Araeen experienced during the 1960s and early 1970s necessitated his turn to critical representations of his self—frequently deploying the Urdu script—in order to render visible large social and structural formations. Araeen embarked on this modality despite the fact that he has been deeply critical of valorizing artistic subjectivity and the emphasis on cultural difference, least of all of his own self. For example, in a passage critiquing what he sees as the recent self-reification of exoticism and difference by many non-Western artists, he cogently notes:

> What is even more problematic about these recent [artistic] practices is the foregrounding of or exaggerated emphasis on the subjectivity of the artist, leading to what is called the identity or body politics. Although these practices can be legitimated by a critical theory of reflexivity, to quote Habermas, "[I]t makes transparent the structure of prejudice in understanding, and thereby can also break the power of prejudice." The problem of this theory is that it is based on an understanding of literature in which the author can be separated from the narrative, and the narrative can speak to the readers without institutional mediation. But when it is applied to the identity or body politics of visual art, it leads to the primacy of the individual self, producing a kind of individualism by which the subject becomes separated from social process. The only choice the subject then

FIGURE 4.1.
Rasheed Araeen, Ham Raqs (Dancing Partner)*, 1959. Oil on canvas. 60 × 40 cm. (Courtesy Rasheed Araeen.)*

has is to turn to the art institution for the recognition and legitimation of his or her activity as art.[7]

Because of his ambivalence regarding the use of his own persona and his suspicion of identifying difference as foundational to an artist's work, he productively reopens the larger issue of whether there can even be a category of "modern Islamic art" to begin with, and why such a conception remains constantly in danger of falling into essentialism and self-exoticism.[8] This chapter argues that by his critical and reflexive practice and, indeed, by the disavowal of the very category itself, Araeen brings to the notion of "modern Islamic art" a persistent practice of self-critique and social engagement.

Araeen studied civil engineering as a career in Karachi, but he had already become deeply interested in the practice of modern art. His early Karachi paintings, such as *Ham Raqs* (1959), show thematic correspondences with those of other contemporaries working out a language of modernist abstraction but are distinguished by a sense of rhythm and movement, values that he continued to develop in his later work in other media (Figure 4.1). Significantly,

FIGURE 4.2. *Rasheed Araeen,* Burning Bicycle Tyres, *Karachi, 1959 (reconstructed in London, 1975). (Courtesy Rasheed Araeen.)*

in 1959 he also ventured beyond painterly formalist modernism by producing a fluxus-like performance—a highly innovative practice especially in the context of Karachi—by burning two bicycle tires, leaving behind their four thin metal armature wires as an undulating sculptural form reminiscent of his paintings (Figure 4.2).[9] Along with other artists who discussed modern art in cafés and at exhibitions, Araeen generally felt stifled by the lack of support and the "celebration of mostly derivative and mediocre"[10] modern art in Karachi and decided to move to Europe, arriving in England in 1964.[11] He initially

worked as a civil engineer but continued to develop his artistic ideas, inspired particularly by the sculptures of Anthony Caro, "perhaps [by] the way he used engineering material, steel girders etc, which had the appearance of having been picked up from a discarded heap of demolished engineering works."[12] However, Araeen instinctively might have realized that Caro's work retained a language of centrality and hierarchy.[13] Based on his civil engineering training, Araeen developed a series of lattice structures in the mid-1960s, a conceptual approach to modularity, industrial fabrication, and phenomenology that corresponds with the rise of minimalism in the United States (Figure 4.3). He was also becoming deeply interested in seeing the work of art not as a finished object but as a collective process, and he developed projects and proposals for creating modular structures that would be continually rearranged by participants, creating a dynamic and processual work that continually unfolded. His works during the mid- and later 1960s thus align themselves with contemporary movements such as minimalism, conceptualism, and performance art. By 1966 he had become aware that values of movement and equality were key elements of his work: "Although I had an obsession with MOVEMENT and expressed it in my work since 1959, it was only in 1966 that I suddenly became aware of the STRUCTURAL RELATIONS—the relations between EQUAL elements/objects when placed at EQUAL distances in a particular system. This, to me, represented a system in which the elements being always in MOVEMENT in such a way that the distance between them is always constant."[14]

Starting in 1969, Araeen conducted participatory performances in the United Kingdom and, on occasion, in Karachi. In *Chakras* (1969–70) (Figure 4.4), Araeen and his friends threw large flat disks of equal size into a body of water—the subsequent movement of the disks in relation to each other and to the surroundings apostrophized values of becoming, movement, and equality, which also need to be situated in an era of decolonization, which hold the promise of a world no longer dominated by hierarchies, and which are in broad accordance with the aims of youth and social movements during the 1960s.[15]

Araeen faced difficulties in showing his work in mainstream art institutions, eventually coming to the realization that larger structural forces persistently blocked efforts by nonwhite artists to achieve recognition. The predicament Chughtai and Zubeida Agha had faced, in being urged not to lose their "oriental" character, was a demand that non-Western artists continually faced in Britain. Araeen, for example, notes that when the Indian artist

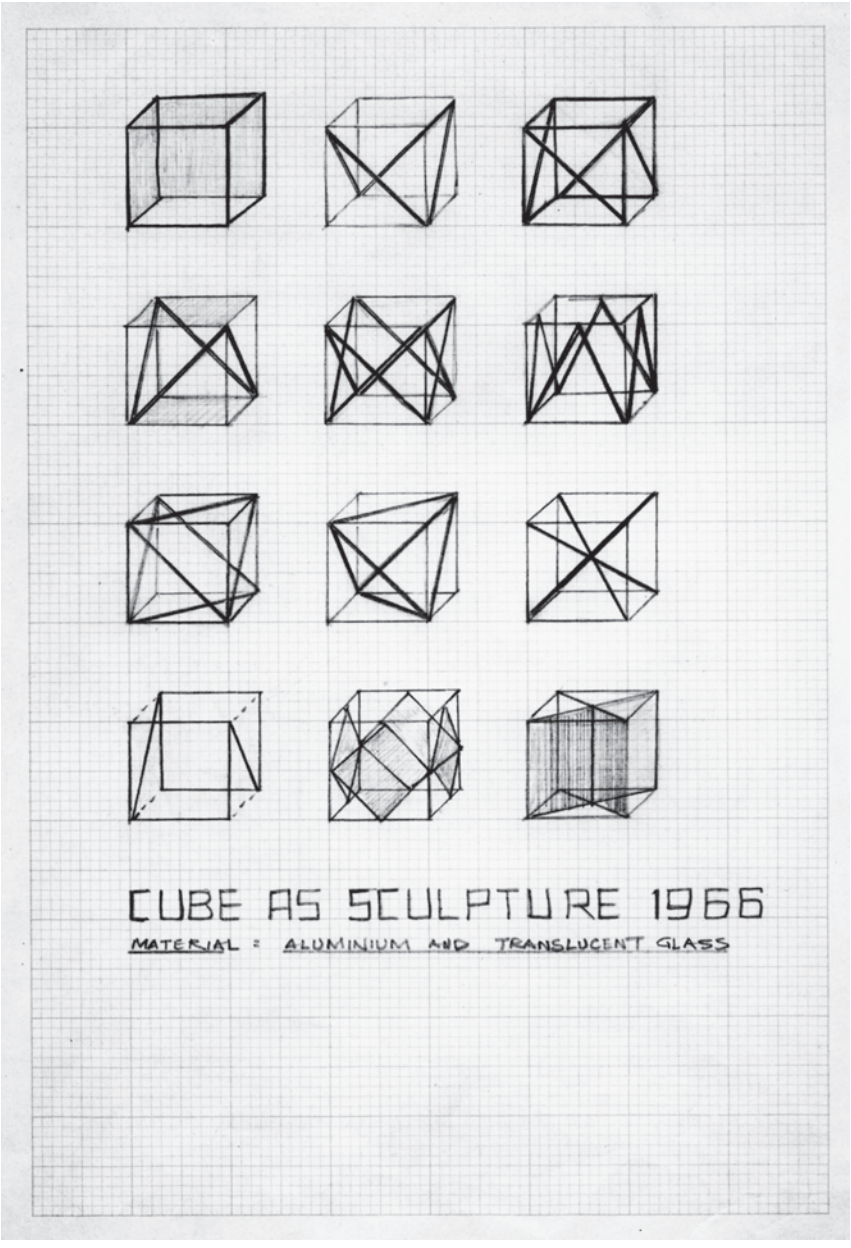


FIGURE 4.3. *Rasheed Araeen*, Cube as Sculpture, *1966. Pencil on paper. 91.4 × 91.4 × 91.4 cm. (Courtesy Rasheed Araeen.)*

FIGURE 4.4.
Rasheed Araeen, Chakras (Waterdiscs), *St. Katherine Docks, London, 1969–70. (Courtesy Rasheed Araeen.)*

Avinash Chandra approached a gallery in London during the late 1950s "the gallery director looked *at his face* and asked him if he could 'paint elephants and tigers.'"[16] The importance of such experiences in possessing the power of interpellating and authorizing an artist's work and persona should not be minimized. Araeen underwent a similar experience that he sees as formative to his later artistic consciousness. Meeting a sympathetic critic, a professor of fine arts at the Slade School of Art during the late 1960s, who had praised his work during a grand party when all the studios at the St. Katherine Docks were open to invited visitors in the summer of 1970,[17] Araeen recalls: "As we were looking at various works something suddenly occurred to me, and I asked him: 'how did you know that was my work.' I asked this question because the studio was full of people and there was no particular indication that I was the artist. 'Aren't you an Arab,' he replied looking at my face. 'No, I'm from Pakistan,' I said, becoming rather puzzled by all this. 'Oh, it's all the same. You are Muslim.' 'Yes,' I said reluctantly. 'You see, this kind of work could have been conceived only by a Muslim. I cannot imagine any European doing this work,' he began to explain politely. Instead of being happy with this interpretation of my work, I became irritated and annoyed."[18] Araeen notes that this was the first time his work was associated with the "Islamic tradition,"[19] a framing he has continued to resist until today. Referring to his technical training as an engineer and his interest in transnational modernism, he pointedly asks: "What has all this got to do with Islam? If there is a connection with Islamic art, in terms of a similitude, it only makes the work more complex. How about my experience of the modern, technological culture, and my intellectual endeavor to transform it into a significant representation?"[20] The very disassociation Araeen offers to the framing of his work with reference to Islamic art renders it significant, in the sense that it invites critical engagement with and persistent critique of—rather than celebration of—"tradition."

London during the mid-1960s was an exciting center for artists of diverse backgrounds making and exhibiting innovative work. Significant modernist and avant-gardist artists residing there included Francis Newton Souza, Ahmed Parvez, Iqbal Geoffrey, and Anwar Jalal Shemza from South Asia, Guyanese artists Aubrey Williams and Frank Bowling, the Nigerian artist Uzo Egonu, and the Taiwanese artist and poet Li Yuan Chia. Centers such as the New Vision Centre and SIGNALS LONDON encouraged modernist and avant-gardist practices, especially in showing groundbreaking Latin American artists, such as Venezuelan artist Jesús Rafael Soto and Brazilian artist Lygia Clark. In particular, the Filipino artist and poet David Medalla was a highly dynamic figure in the United Kingdom, inspiring others by his own kinetic artwork, by his running of the space SIGNALS LONDON, and through his publishing of the journal *Signals*.[21] However, both New Vision Centre and SIGNALS LONDON closed in 1966. Despite the rhetoric of revolution in the air, as the 1960s progressed and with the larger failures of 1968's events in instantiating durable political transformation, institutional hegemony gained momentum[22] and nonwhite artists were increasingly marginalized.[23] Araeen came to the realization that mechanisms of otherness were a structural feature of Western art institutions, which persistently judged "that a non-European cannot be an authentic modernist."[24] Despite recognition of the value of his pioneering work by numerous critics and observers, he was unable to secure institutional representation and recognition.[25]

The year 1971 saw a decisive shift in Araeen's career toward a more engaged relationship with social critique. He notes that one factor in this shift in consciousness in his work and in the work of others was the return of David Medalla after he had visited parts of the developing world. Araeen was also introduced to the writings of Frantz Fanon that year, which have deeply shaped his subsequent work in bringing about the realization that his personal predicament as an artist was only a part of persistent legacies of imperialism and racism. Feminist artistic consciousness was another major development of the 1970s in Britain, as was the founding of the collective Artists for Democracy in 1974. Araeen's text, "Preliminary Notes for a Black Manifesto" (1975–76), which remains foundational for understanding this decade, is a document remarkable for its bold and comprehensive analysis of the predicaments of nonwhite modern artists in that era. The rise of the Black Arts movement in the early 1980s—a key development in theorizing the globality and transnationalism of modern art during the late twentieth century—has been documented in some detail by its participants and other scholars.[26] My purpose here is not to revisit these insightful and often conten-

tious debates but to focus on the question of subjectivity in Araeen's artworks from the mid-1970s, with reference to "tradition."[27]

Araeen is based in London, but he travels widely and has been making frequent trips to Pakistan since the 1980s. He has collected and deployed a range of materials from what he calls the "urban vernacular culture of cities" of Pakistan in his work from the early 1980s. He has occasionally written and lectured on the predicament of modern art in Pakistan since 1976,[28] and he recently launched the journal *Third Text Asia*, published in Karachi beginning in 2008. Apart from his own artwork, Araeen has devoted considerable effort to *Third Text*, issued regularly since 1987 and publishing the writings of over 500 authors, making it a leading journal devoted to institutional critique and to the work of non-Western modern artists globally. Araeen sees this endeavor itself as a conceptual artistic activity undertaken by a collective and thus forming an important facet of his artistic goals. It may be noted that Araeen's first critical text was published in a newspaper in Pakistan in 1976, and with the recent launch of another edition of *Third Text*, titled *Third Text Asia* and issued from Karachi, Araeen has brought an awareness of challenges facing Asia and the Middle East to a Pakistani audience that did not have easy access to the criticism published in *Third Text*.[29] He has also recently lectured on modernism in Pakistan, offering close readings of works by Sadequain and Hanif Ramay, a pioneer of calligraphic modernism.[30] By these efforts, Araeen remains interested in developing institutions of criticism and debate, globally, but also specifically in South Asia and the Muslim world.

A significant multimedia performance piece by Araeen, *Paki Bastard* (1977), which was performed at the invitation of David Medalla at Artists for Democracy as a continuation of the "Black Manifesto," traces the personal journey of Araeen from Karachi to the United Kingdom and his growing consciousness of his own predicament as exemplary of a larger struggle by minorities in Britain against racism. The piece also expresses an affiliation with the working-class struggle and with the larger issue of decolonization in sites of anti-imperialist resistance, such as Vietnam and Algeria (Figure 4.5). He juxtaposed images of the Brick Lane area in London—home to many South Asian immigrants—with images of labor struggles, accompanied by a complex sound track. This work already foregrounds the problem of artistic subjectivity in relation to the social body, as seen in a statement that introduces the documentation: "The following 6 photographs is a selection from 50 sequences. The text is not exactly the interpretation of the images here, but contains some of the thoughts that went into the making of the work. And although it contains autobiographical references, *it would be wrong to read*

consciousness, ~~as well as the subjectivity (psyche) of the individual which is necessary for the critical reflection of the system in which one is living~~, then any prescription that marginalises the role of art must be rejected).
However, the piece ends with a synthesis (above photograph): The top left is the face of an Indian woman who, after the big demo at Grunwick in which 10,000 people took part and in which many people were injured as the result of police violence (according to a Time Out report people received injuries on testicles and breasts), stands alone outside Grunwick holding a playcard that reads AN INJURY TO ONE IS INJURY TO ALL. The word INJURY can be seen on the floor next to the artist who is cutting the broom into pieces. The top right is a sculpture done a few years ago by cutting the wood into pieces and then joining them together...

FIGURE 4.5. *Rasheed Araeen,* Paki Bastard, *multimedia performance, 1977. (Courtesy Rasheed Araeen.)*

it at a personal level" (italics mine). Moreover, in the accompanying textual commentary, one section reads as follows:

> The role of art in human struggle perhaps needs a comment here. Should art become an instrument of political struggle in a mechanical and functional way, or should it maintain its specific function vis-à-vis ideology. If we truly accept the dialectics of the process of transformation, the dialectical interaction between different human activities, taking into consideration both the collective and individual levels of consciousness, ~~as well as the subjectivity (psyche) of the individual which is necessary for the critical reflection of the system in which one is living,~~ then any prescription that marginalizes the role of art must be rejected [in the original, the typewritten text was crossed out by hand].

Apart from its pointed social commentary, *Paki Bastard* eloquently exemplifies and, indeed, plays out the dilemma of the artist who needs to focus on the self in order to narrate larger but invisible structures of power yet not fall back on tropes of individual emancipation and transcendence. Accordingly, although the performance offers a complex narrative passage toward a more conscious struggle for liberation in solidarity with others, it resists a redemptive conclusion of having achieved either personal release or wider social liberation.

Since the 1970s, Araeen has deployed time-based or temporary/ephemeral media such as cardboard and nonaesthetic photography, thus participating in conceptual art and performance movements that have sought to resist and critique the institutional aesthetization and commodification of art. In the case of nonwhite artists in Britain, this additionally meant refusing to accept the position of the exotic other that was being developed during that era of multiculturalism by the British art establishment. It may be noted that as official support of "culture," including modern and contemporary art, has increasingly played a very large role in postindustrial Britain—the growing number of prestigious government-supported galleries and the founding of the annual Turner Prize in 1984 are only a few indicators of its global scope—institutional legitimacy has accordingly played a decisive role in shaping artists' careers. Araeen's continuing critiques of institutional racism need to be understood in this context.

The series of self-portraits made between 1978 and 1982 continue critique of both self and society. Araeen had made an early portrait in 1964, the year of his arrival in London, but he returned to a repeated and intensive exploration of his own visage as a subject struggling to enact a self against larger

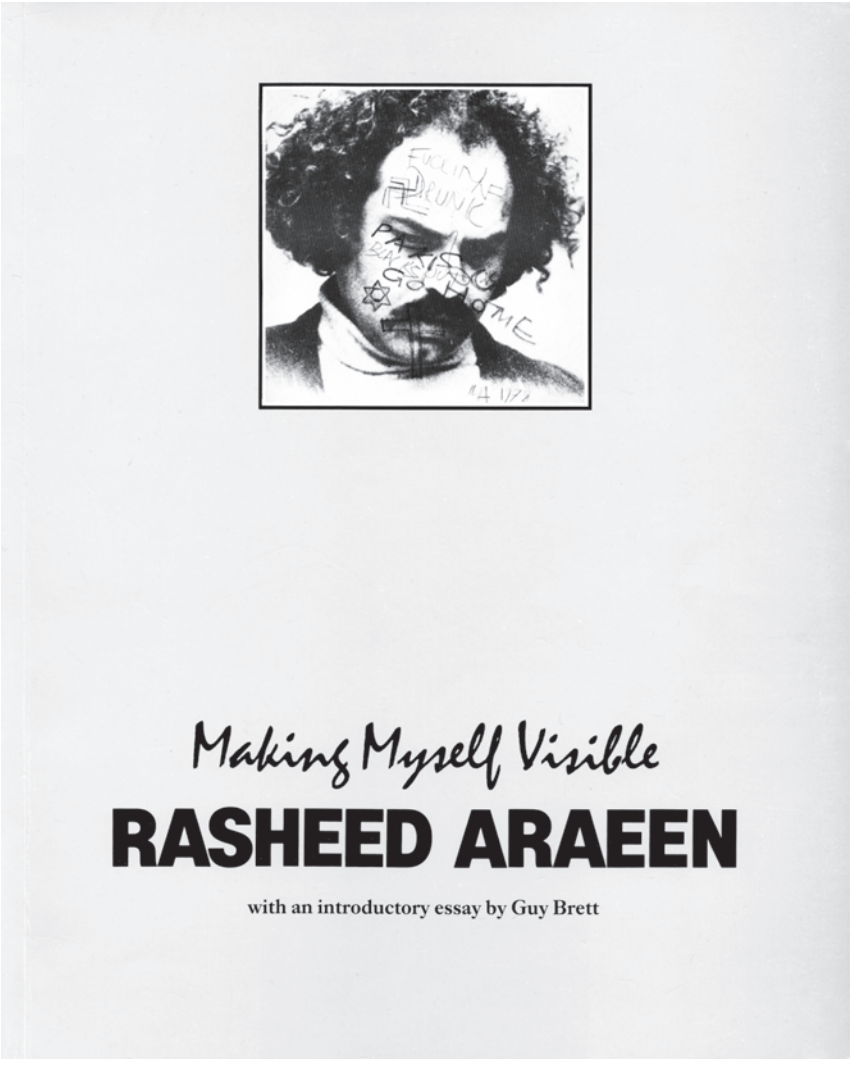


FIGURE 4.6. *Rasheed Araeen, drawing on photograph, 1978–79, on cover of* Making Myself Visible*, 1984. (Courtesy Rasheed Araeen.)*

forces of racism and exoticism. The first portrait (1978), reproduced on the cover of the book *Making Myself Visible*, shows a nonaestheticized photograph of his face, scribbled with racist graffiti (Figure 4.6). This series culminates in *Ethnic Drawings* (1982), a set of four panels that no longer use a photograph as the base but reconstruct the same posture through drawing and written Urdu and English text (Figure 4.7). A number of interpretive conundrums face the audience of these works, beginning with the question of whether one

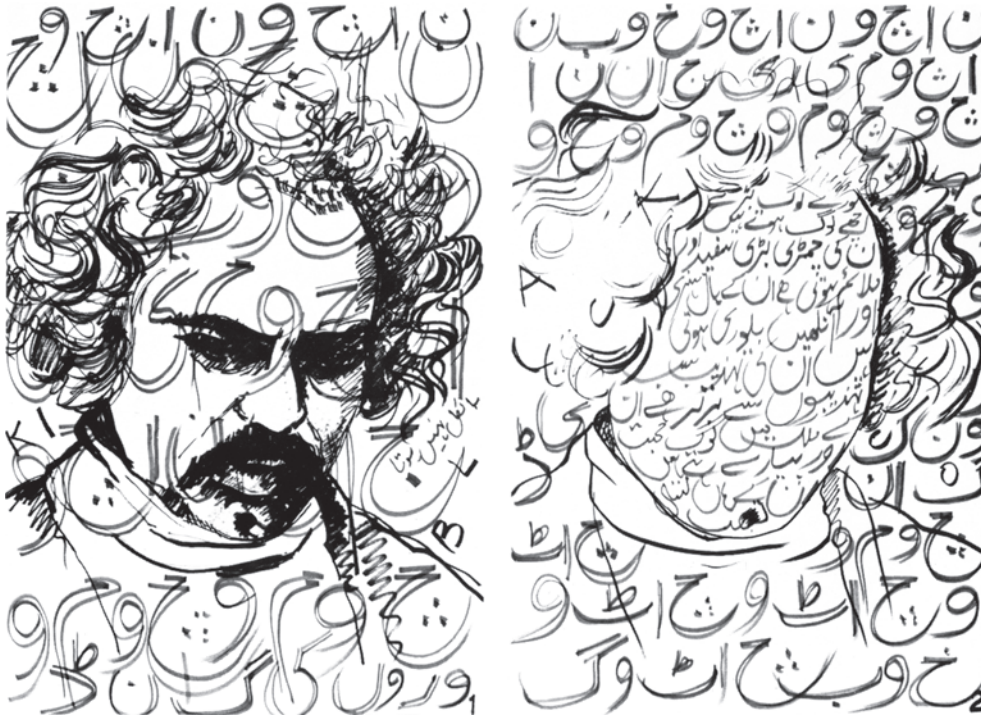


FIGURE 4.7. *Rasheed Araeen,* Ethnic Drawings, *1982. Drawings on cardboard. Four panels, each 80 × 54.5 cm. (Arts Council Collection, Southbank Centre, London. Courtesy Rasheed Araeen.)*

is able to read the Urdu text. The audience is therefore supposedly divided by whether or not the viewer possesses this ability. But even for an observer who can make out the Urdu text, meaning is not transparent but layered, flickering between clarity and opacity. One is also confronted with the directionality of the script. The English words demand a left-to-right reading, but Urdu is written from right to left, so one might begin viewing the work with the right panel, which also begins on top with the Urdu alphabet, the way a child might learn to write. But the text within the face is not childlike or innocent. Loaded imperatives, "kiss" [*chumo*], "lick" [*chato*], "dance" [*nacho*], "my love" [*meri jan*], are repeated, inviting the observer to an erotic experience of encounter and movement, whose references range from the titles of some of Araeen's early paintings and Indian film songs to the problem of psychic colonization identified in Fanon's writings. Even the left-to-right reading of the panels is interrupted by phrases written in English across panels, BL/ACK, CO/LORED, BR/OWN, and PA/KI, creating a circular trajectory of reading, in

which no panel acquires primacy, thus disturbing any secure narrative viewpoint.

The second panel from the left abandons the innocence of the alphabet sequence, now repeating the erotic phrases identified above in large letters. The face in this panel contains a reference to the English nursery rhyme, "Baa, baa, black sheep / Have you any wool? / Yes sir, yes sir, / Three bags full / One for the master / . . . ." The connotations of Araeen's modified text, "YES SIR YES SIR ONE BAG FULL," stem from its childlike innocence but also from its colonized import—perhaps a phrase that might have been uttered by a native coolie in the service of a white colonizer? Or is the "black sheep" the black artist as a social outcast, able to offer only a paltry tribute to the master and prevented from entering art historical canonicity by not possessing sufficiently weighty work? The bottom of the panel introduces much of the bitingly ironic Urdu text of "The Golden Verses," which Araeen later deployed in his billboards:

> White people are very good people. They have very white and soft skin. Their hair is golden and their eyes are blue. Their civilization is the best civilization. In their countries, they live life with love and affection. And there is no racial discrimination whatsoever. White people are very good people.

The third panel repeats the erotic imperatives calligraphed in its ground. The figure's features are erased and replaced by the Golden Verses. In the right panel, the face recovers its features, but the figure and the ground are overwritten by the erotic imperatives.

The drawings thus enact the dialectic of encounter and erasure of the self, experienced through a colonization of desire itself, as Fanon had theorized, and which South Asians have unwittingly participated in (as seen in other works by Araeen, such as *Fair and Lovely* [1985], that are based on actual Pakistani advertisements for cosmetics promising whiteness). The texts of *Ethnic Drawings* also connote the intricacy of escaping from relational definitions of the self that are developed structurally with reference to a sedimented hegemonic order of whiteness.[31] The calligraphy, which is handled nonaesthetically—unlike historical aesthetic master styles such as *nastʿaliq*—further suggests that a self undergoing a persistent process of critique requires sober recognition rather than celebration.

Araeen further addresses the difficulty of recognition of the self—by the self and by society—in *Narcissus* (1981–83) (Figure 4.8). In this work, a famous couplet by poet Muhammad Iqbal emblazoned on top laments the scarcity of people who possess a discerning vision and an ability to judge true self-worth. *Narcissus* enacts a play of centering and displacement of the self by the viewer, who does not face the mirror directly because the mirrors are located very close to the ground. Instead, the viewer is at eye level with the image of a gently rippled water surface vertically rent into two parts—the gap is filled with multiple segmented views of the artist's face. Araeen, however, extends his critique of the failures of modern "Islamic" thought to Iqbal himself: "I did use Iqbal's famous verse about *Nargis* [Narcissus], which invokes the complexity of human predicament in seeking recognition for what one is. In my early youth, Iqbal was my favourite poet. I did read *Bang-e-Dara* [Iqbal's first collection of Urdu poetry] many times. I have also read his letters to his parents while he was in Germany." But unlike numerous celebratory readers of Iqbal, Araeen offers an immanent critique of the poet: "I do understand his lament and longing for the lost golden days of Islamic civilisation, but I'm not sure I agree with his ideas about 'Islamic revival.' In 1912, he said: 'The root

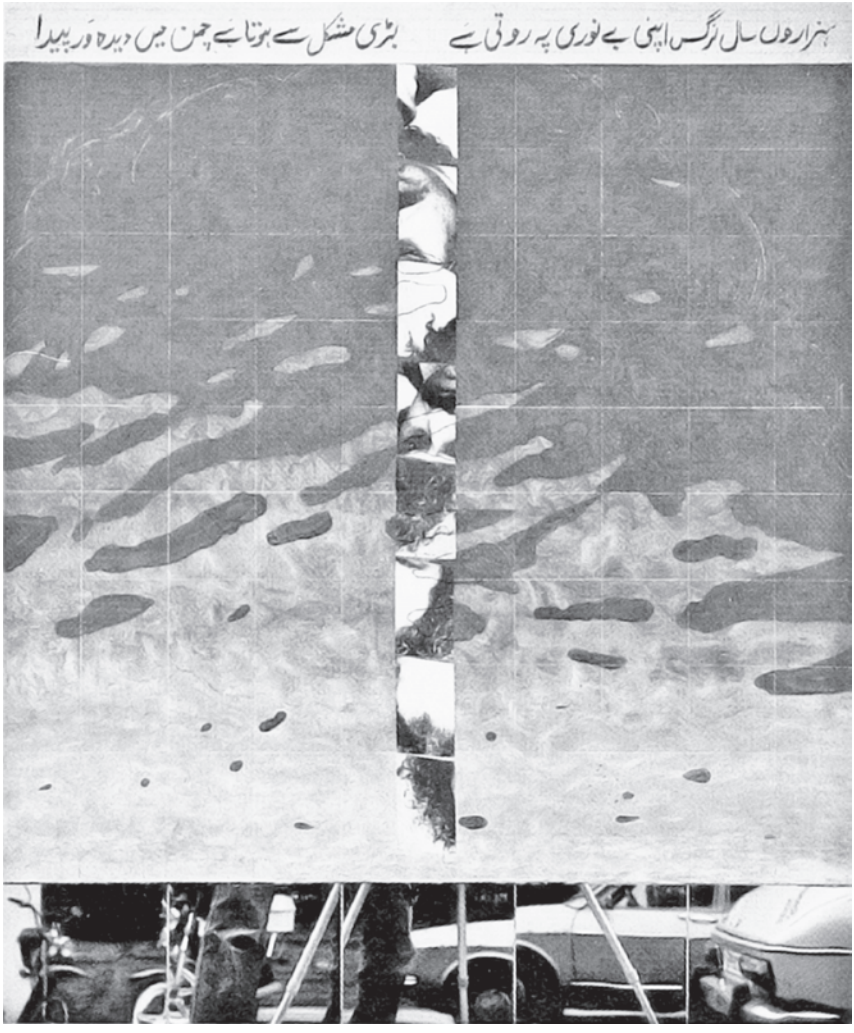


FIGURE 4.8. *Rasheed Araeen,* Narcissus, *1981–83. Acrylic on board with mirrors. 122 × 101.5 cm. (Courtesy Rasheed Araeen.)*

of all evil is private property.' Why did he not pursue this thought further? He could have done this within the Islamic concept of *masawaat* [equality]?"[32] Here again, Araeen foregrounds equality as a key value, which he considers to be implicitly present yet insufficiently developed in "Islamic" cultural forms, even in a highly reflexive and philosophical modern poet like Iqbal.

In both *Ethnic Drawings* and *Narcissus*, the calligraphy functions for a non-Urdu reader on one level as a mark of irreducible alterity and incommensurability and epitomizes the difficulty mainstream modernism has encountered

in incorporating a difference it cannot easily tame or translate.[33] But an intentional anticipatory meaning persists within these works. Alluding to his larger strategy of deferred critical interpretation of his usage of Urdu texts, Araeen has stated:

> *Ethnic Drawings* contain my anger against both the Asians and the establishment, who were in collusion — and are now even more so — in denying my freedom to express myself as a free human being. . . . As for Western critics, I deliberately prevented them from understanding it as they would only be interested in my identity, which they do get when they look at the work but are not able to penetrate and understand it. The significance of the work in fact lies in what Duchamp called "deferral" as the work is projected into the future when Urdu speaking critics or historians will have ability to penetrate and understand it.[34]

Beginning in the later 1980s, Araeen incorporated the critique of the self and his understanding of minimalism and conceptualism into works that address the pervasive mediatized visual cultures of commodification and spectacle in late capitalism. *The Golden Verses* (1990), a billboard work shown at numerous public sites in Britain and also in Germany and the United States, uses the text quoted above but with beautiful calligraphy in a golden *nastaʿliq* script on an image of a famous "Islamic" carpet (Plate 15).[35] The oriental carpet is, of course, yet another stock motif/medium associated with Islamic art, and it was, in fact, recently an organizing trope of an exhibition on modern Islamic art by the Museum of Modern Art in New York.[36] In *The Golden Verses*, Araeen's strategy of visual seduction is strikingly deployed — in keeping with its being placed at advertisement sites. Indeed, as Guy Brett has perceptively noted, "the piece was fully conversant with advertising techniques, especially rife in Britain, which engage by visual enigma, riddle or obliqueness — avoiding, in other words, the hard sell of either commercial or political rhetoric."[37] For someone familiar with Urdu, the seduction is undercut by its critique of the self, but for those unfamiliar with the script, it can appear as threateningly "Islamic"- or Qurʾanic-looking. *The Golden Verses* elicited a charged and contested reception at its many sites. It was damaged by burning, by having holes punched in it, by having antiracist flyers pasted over it, by having Urdu slogans painted on it, stating, "White people are bastards" on the one hand, and a swastika on the other. It was thus attacked by Asian groups who understood Urdu but who likely "didn't appreciate its irony" and probably also by white supremacist groups.[38] Despite its beauty, the work offered no comfort to any group. It upset many Urdu-speaking viewers by reminding them of per-

vasive external racism but also of their own psychic colonization while simultaneously offering a challenge of a prominent public text that was threatening to white nationalists and racists. As critics have noted, *The Golden Verses* was created in the wake of the controversy following the publication of Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* (1989). There is a continuing scholarly debate on the "Rushdie affair" and its effect on British society, but sociologist Pnina Werbner has noted consequences of the public visibility of British Muslim life in its wake, which is relevant to my analysis:

> The Rushdie affair might be said to have had some important positive effects as well. It liberated Pakistani settler-citizens from the self-imposed burden of being a silent, well-behaved minority, whatever the provocation, and opened up the realm of *activist, anti-racist and emancipatory citizenship politics*. . . . One might say that the shame of Islam generated by the Rushdie affair has been turned into a new strength, a new agenda for multiculturalism, for a fundamental revision of the national self-image of Britain as it moves to becoming a more self-consciously plural society. Muslims are both the victims and the torch-bearers of this movement.[39]

Araeen was precisely such an activist long before 1989, but one who forged his activism in collaboration with other artists' collectives and activist groups, such as the Black Panthers, rather than with self-identified Muslims as such. His work since the late 1970s, interrogating the process of formation of subjectivities, was, however, prescient, and it is therefore even more significant that he modified the title of the billboard work from *The Golden Words* to *The Golden Verses* to address developments in the wake of the "Rushdie affair." Araeen thus deploys the highly visible medium of the billboard to strike a cautionary dissident note—that the emergent public Muslim selfhood in the wake of injuries of the "Rushdie affair" requires persistent self-critique of its formation rather than developing a dangerous and false perception regarding its own authenticity and victimhood.[40]

An important series of works that Araeen has produced since the mid-1980s consists of works whose visual grammar is based on a minimalist grid of 3 × 3 but whose cells have also been invaded by mass-cultural and mediatized images and texts. Critics have viewed these works as moving toward postmodernism (although qualifying it as "critical postmodernism" or even as "contemporary" might be a better descriptor).[41] The four corner panels consist of either a flat field of green or details of images that retain an overall green cast, creating complex spatial allusions to the marginality of "greenness" displaced by a central crucifix form. The color green itself possesses

multiple connotations, including nature and ecology and the color of Islam and the Pakistani flag. The five inside panels frequently depict images from what Araeen refers to as the "vernacular urban culture" of Pakistan, and they sometimes also include images of blood from Eid sacrifice and televised images of aircraft and of victims of war. Many inside panels are also captioned by Urdu newspaper headlines. Even though Araeen has stated that his Urdu references have "no particular significance" in these works,[42] one needs to see this claim within his larger strategy of allusiveness, latency, and deferral. Unlike his previous works, which he disassociated from Islamic art, Araeen here remains strategically ambivalent about the purported "Islamic" character of the geometric minimalism of the grammar and themes of these works, possibly due to their opening toward a geopolitical mediatized space in which "Islam" can no longer signify modernist or mystic transcendence but instead a sense of contemporary worldliness.[43]

Of interest here is thus the manner in which Araeen produces a juxtaposition of the mediatized image world that is not simply limited to Western imagery. Rather, the works map waves of layered visual "scapes" that increasingly characterize our era—whether one lives in Karachi or in London.[44] Here, due to space limitations, only one work is considered, *White Stallion* (1991) (Plate 16), made with reference to the First Gulf War (1991), which features a central panel with the image of Saddam Hussein mounted on a white horse holding a flag that proclaims *Allah-o Akbar* (God is Great), overlaying an image of General Norman Schwartzkopf at a press conference with the U.S. and the Saudi flags flanking him in the background.[45] The four adjacent panels show a grainy television image from CNN of a U.S. AWACS aircraft approaching an aircraft carrier. The four corner panels are painted flat green. In an insightful discussion of *White Stallion*, Paul Overy has teased out many of the complexities of this work, showing how the aircraft "lock in" the image of Saddam and how the racial anxieties in the U.S. war effort itself are connoted in the names of the U.S. generals (Schwartzkopf, meaning "black head," and more visible on TV than his superior, African American Colin Powell). References also include posters of Saddam that widely circulated in Pakistan based on a glorified painting by Jacques-Louis David, *Bonaparte Crossing the Alps at Grand Saint-Bernard* (1800–1801), but which also signify Imam Husain's martyrdom at Karbala.[46] The reading offered here supplements Paul Overy's analysis by examining the Urdu and Arabic text employed and its "Islamic" significations. Saddam's flag, which depicts one pious formula of Islam, is juxtaposed by another, the Islamic testament of faith written on the Saudi flag, implying that, geopolitically at least, "Islam" itself is divided

here between two equally grotesque poles—the pious professions of a brutal dictator and the imperialist U.S.-Saudi nexus intent on safeguarding its elite interests. Furthermore, the Urdu headlines report news of the Gulf crisis but also include crises within Pakistani politics itself, including Shia-Sunni violence. The Urdu and Arabic texts thus provide a critique of the Muslim self, divided by numerous ideological fault lines, in which no side is redemptive. Finally, *White Stallion* juxtaposes two different visual regimes, that of print with the real-time, pervasive televisuality denoted by CNN, which had started its broadcasts to Pakistan just before the First Gulf War, creating a temporality radically at odds with the stodgy, state-controlled Pakistani TV news. As many observers have noted, the First Gulf War had superseded the era of war photojournalism by replacing it with a real-time, yet disembodied, representation of war in which the agency of representation becomes abstracted and virtualized.[47] *White Stallion* thus also enacts the crisis of the subjective modernist work of art as metaphorizing social utopia, by highlighting how (modernist) art and cultural politics can no longer exclude mediatized popular forms that dominate our era.[48]

Rasheed Araeen has situated his career in the mainstream of modernism that he understands to be universalist and progressive. He draws from his South Asianness and Muslimness, from the progressive legacies of Western Enlightenment, and also from the collective struggles of the colonized and the oppressed globally to chart a trajectory of a critical cosmopolitanism. The artist has never been interested in specifically Islamic issues in his art, and he remains deeply suspicious of ascription of such references to his work. Nevertheless, by continued strategic deployment of forms and tropes of "Islamic art," Araeen has persistently enacted an immanent self-critique of Islamic tradition, without reification or sacralization.[49] By foregrounding values such as equality that were implicitly present in "Islamic" art and culture only as form, Araeen demonstrates how "tradition" itself requires an uneasy and confrontational inhabitation in order to render it relevant for addressing the conflicted and divided present.

NAIZA KHAN

Karachi-based artist Naiza Khan was born in Bhawalpur in 1968 and was educated in Britain. Trained as a printmaker at the Ruskin School, Oxford, Khan has engaged in a continuing dialogue between the disciplines of academic drawing and printmaking and the realities of postcolonial Pakistan, which are deeply marked by issues of gender. Her work engages with

FIGURE 4.9.
Naiza Khan in her studio, Karachi, 2005. (Courtesy Naiza H. Khan.)

the anxieties surrounding the textual construction of gender and also with the resilient poetic habitation of women's bodies in everyday rituals and objects. Although the Pakistani public sphere is characterized by limitations on and vulnerability of women, it is also haunted by the silent and unacknowledged presence/absence of women. Naiza Khan's work might thus be described as unveiling traces of this paradoxical "spectral corporeality." In her work, the female body finally becomes visible in modern South Asian "Islamic" art as a subject in itself, rather than simply remaining a decorative motif. Khan has also devoted considerable effort to founding and supporting institutions. Besides teaching, she has led VASL, an artists' collective that runs workshops and residencies and also provides an important internet platform to support numerous Pakistani artists living across the world.[50]

For over a decade, Naiza Khan has developed her practice through a persistent formal and thematic meditation on the female body. She has charted an exemplary independent path among the shifting currents of contemporary Pakistani art, producing an extended body of work exploring the sensuality of the female body, but also its weight, its opacity, and its recalcitrance in relation to the social order. Her works are articulated primarily by the practice of studio drawing and printmaking (Figure 4.9) and are supplemented by

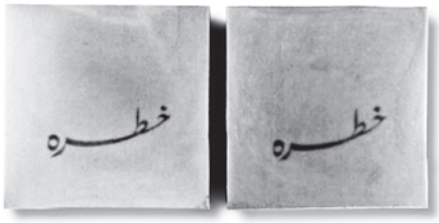


FIGURE 4.10.
Naiza H. Khan, Khatra Khatra (Danger Danger)*, 2000. Latex and text on board. 20 × 40 cm. (Courtesy Naiza H. Khan.)*

a self-imposed, limited use of nontraditional media, such as latex, organza, and henna paste. Two groups of her work are examined here, *Henna Hands*, in which she emerges from the studio to directly confront the urban fabric of Karachi, and *Heavenly Ornaments*, which marks her move toward sculpture and toward a more direct engagement with formative discourses of gender in modern South Asian Islam.

In her past works from the mid-1990s, she has employed drawing, Letraset type, calligraphy, and handwritten graffiti in Urdu and English, in conjunction with sculptural works made with latex, organza, and other unconventional materials. Her drawings and prints have carefully delineated aspects and fragments of the female body, and her latex and text works have incorporated graffiti-like texts in Urdu and English, messages that appear to strive to speak with great urgency but which remain fragmentary and largely undecipherable in the end (Figure 4.10). In these works, Naiza Khan may be thought of as working within an academic artistic language that she puts toward a search for representational adequacy of women's subjectivity. In a recent statement, Khan has commented on her artistic trajectory as follows: "I am often stepping back or rather forced to step back, and begin to see how I am struggling to create an autonomous feminine subjectivity, which is pertinent to my own personal realities. What is becoming visible is my need to articulate how the body is marked by femininity as a lived experience, where subjectivity is produced through new narratives."[51]

HENNA HANDS

A series called *Henna Hands* (1997–2003) continues to explore her earlier concerns in her studio-based practice but now also marks a shift in orientation toward an intervention in the urban popular public arena (Plates 17, 18, Figures 4.11–4.13). *Henna Hands* can be situated in relation to other interventions in the public space where artists respond to the specific history of an urban site.[52] For example, the Chinese artist Zhang Dali has employed

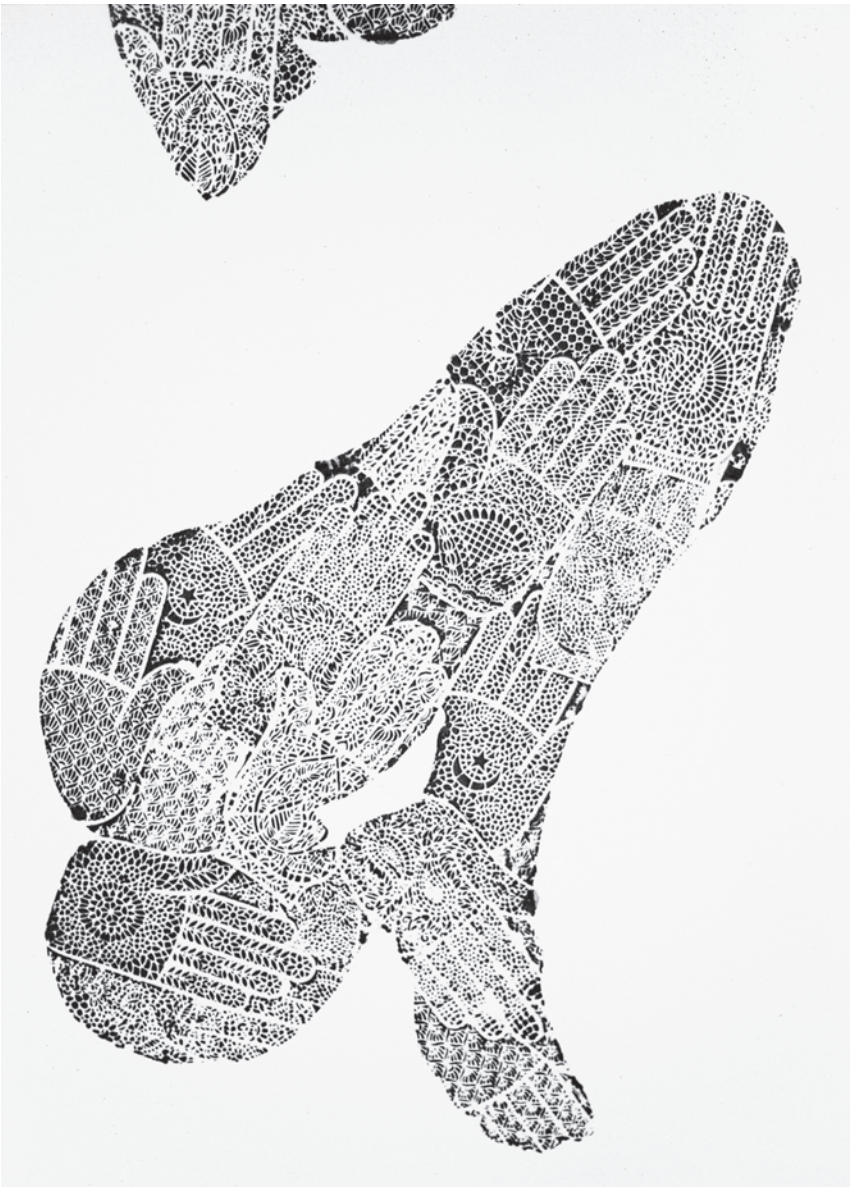


FIGURE 4.11. *Naiza H. Khan,* Henna Hands, *2003. Henna paste on gesso board. Installation detail. (Courtesy Naiza H. Khan.)*

FIGURE 4.12. *Naiza H. Khan,* Henna Hands, *2002. Stenciled henna paste on wall. Installation, Cantt Station, Karachi. (Courtesy Naiza H. Khan.)*

FIGURE 4.13. *Naiza H. Khan,* Henna Hands, *2002. Stenciled henna paste on wall. Installation, Cantt Station, Karachi. (Courtesy Naiza H. Khan.)*

a graffitilike visual language, spray painting an outline of his profile on the walls of Beijing, a city that has been experiencing an extremely rapid transformation.[53] By contrast, the modality of *Henna Hands*, even though it streamlines traditional application techniques, still requires a more patient process than the work of Zhang Dali. In these works, Khan draws both fragmentary and complete silhouettes of the nude female figure in various positions, by using stencil designs of henna patterns. These inexpensive stencil designs are commonly found in bazaars in Pakistan. They are in the form of a hand and are meant to provide a shortcut to the elaborate and time-consuming craft of henna decoration widely practiced on women's palms (and soles of the feet) for festive and ritual occasions.[54]

The plastic stencil design coarsens and "stereotypes" the otherwise fluid and performative practice of henna decoration into a set of designs that are screenlike. For example, long sinuous and serpentine lines are no longer possible. The plastic stencil designs are composed of small angular or curved geometric spaces—not unlike carved Mughal window screens or contemporary decorated cement blocks that separate private interior space from the public street. Traditional methods of henna application are respected crafts of the body, which demand a great deal of patience from the artist and the sitter alike, and the lengthy process of henna decoration thus becomes an occasion for creating a private feminine time and space. The use of the stencil design undermines skill and the opportunity for women's bonding. The henna stencils thus can be seen as marking the ambiguous location where craft practices are witnessing a transformation toward mechanical reproduction. They also allegorize a transformation of the division between the public and the private, and, being analogous to the Mughal window screen or the decorated cement block, they point toward the delineation of, but also the opening out of, the interiority of women's space into public space. For precisely these reasons, the mechanically stamped stencil pattern becomes an important vehicle for Khan's journey into intervening in the gendered public space of Pakistan—where the presence of women has been marked by repression and precariousness.

Initially the artist worked inside, on gallery and studio walls (Figure 4.11), but she found the results to be unsatisfying. The artist then discovered the peeling, palimpsestlike walls of Karachi to be more suitable sites for these enigmatic figures. A typical Karachi public wall experiences daily changes—handbills of advertisements for cigarettes, body lotions, and computer training courses are overlaid with calligraphed announcements of rallies by

ethnic, political, and Islamic groups, as well as with random graffiti. Moreover, a fresh residue of cigarette butts, bodily waste, and decaying printed matter, deposited daily, constantly adorns the walls and sidewalks. The walls bear witness to the traces of countless encounters, becoming sites pregnant with memory, despite the constant threat of obliteration in a city where the construction mafia and informal sector activities continue to overwhelm the efforts by city planners and the municipal authorities to rationalize urban planning and services. With this context in mind, we can now better understand Naiza Khan's compulsion to work directly on the city wall:

> In an attempt to reallocate the *Henna Hands* out of the gallery and studio space I have been working in different locations near the Cantonment Station and Railway Colony. The work started in March 2002 in a lower-middle class area. This "mohalla" [locality] is home to a community of Parsis, Muslims, Christians and Hindus. Most of the old buildings belong to the railways and the residents are slowly being evicted for demolition and rebuilding. Reactions from the residents of the community are informing my own understanding of the work, which was previously constrained by its response from a more select audience within the parameters of the art gallery space.[55]

Khan works early in the morning, before the city is awake. The silhouettes of whole and fractured figures are screened directly onto the wall itself with henna, using the hand-shaped stencil patterns. The figure of the woman, composed of screened hand-patterns, is profoundly multivalent; it attests to the "shaping" of the woman's body by the "hands" of social forces, but it also powerfully reaffirms the presence of the woman in public space but without denying her gendered specificity. Khan states: "In the henna hands, the figure is turned into a sign, rather than an object (of desire) and stripped of its eroticism. It becomes a signifier of self-perception and self-deception, in which silence and repression, domesticity and confinement, vulnerability and retreat simultaneously resonate and contradict as the eye is focused on the pattern and the body that surfaces out of it."[56] The placement of many of the henna figures intrudes upon specifically marked gendered and politicized spaces. For example, in Plate 17, the hennaed silhouette confronts the Urdu lettering claiming this part of the sidewalk as the location of "Aslam Hair Dresser," a makeshift business in the informal sector whose patrons are generally male, as evidenced by the printed poster exhibiting men sporting a variety of "Pakistani" hairstyles. Similarly, in Figure 4.12, the hennaed figure

is created at the same level—but *facing away*—from the Urdu lettering on the left that announces the "March for the Glory of Jihad," organized by an Islamic student group for September 24, 2001, possibly in the geopolitical aftermath of September 11.

It is important to note that henna is not a permanent dye—it fades within a few days. Naiza Khan's figures are fleeting and transient presences, fading away and disappearing, perhaps even before they are fully overlaid and eradicated by newer traces. For example, Figure 4.13 shows a site at which one henna figure was placed. Days later, the artist added another figure, and one can already see the difference between the freshly applied henna figure and the one already fading (Plate 18). This temporal dialectic of presence and absence indexes the fragility of the human body and its ephemeral daily practices amid enormous social change. But the ornamental pattern—however "degraded"—that makes up each handprint also reiterates the continued importance of bodily arts and craft practices in safeguarding an aesthetic that is intimately linked to the human hand. The figure of the woman in popular-public space is thus marked as supplemental. Khan's *Henna Hands* series draws upon craft traditions but also traces their contemporary transformations, in order to poetically reclaim public space and utilize the city skin itself as a site for artistic intervention.

The *Henna Hands* series also references the dangerous ethnic politics of Karachi during the 1990s. This period witnessed the growth of the MQM (Muhajir Qaumi Movement), a political and social organization that championed the identity of migrants from India after the division of colonial India into the postindependence states of India and Pakistan. The decade of the 1990s, filled with daily terror, violence, torture, and extrajudicial killings, was a difficult one for Karachi. Oskar Verkaaik has shown how participation in the MQM fostered a new sense of identity among its members, one that was formed by foregrounding violence with a sense of play and fun.[57] The activities of MQM members contributed to yet another proliferation of visual icons, which saturated Karachi with billboards, posters, and other images. The menacing silhouetted image of the dangerous fighter—one who participates in dangerous play—forms an aspect of this symbolic identity. By comparing *Henna Hands* with the image of the fighter (Figure 4.14), Naiza Khan's intervention can be viewed as a protest against the prevalent imagery of (gendered) political and ethnic violence, yet one that also participates in visual codes made recognizable precisely due to the prior presence of such icons. In seeking to address an expanded public sphere, Khan's studio-based

FIGURE 4.14.
Wall silhouette showing an MQM fighter, Hyderabad. (From Oskar Verkaaik, Migrants and Militants: Fun and Urban Violence in Pakistan *[2004], 168, fig. 5. Courtesy Oskar Verkaaik.)*

language of high art thus enters into a spirited dialogue with the imperatives of urban popular culture.

HEAVENLY ORNAMENTS

With the *Heavenly Ornaments* series (2005–8) (Figures 4.15, 4.16), Khan turned to hard and unyielding metal bodily implements—which include charged objects such as chastity belts, metal corsets, and lingerie made with steel—suggesting that the tension between the demands of the social order and the intractability of the body has sharpened considerably in her recent work:

> Some of these pieces are becoming more jewel like, just by the studding of the welding process across the chest, and I have been quite into the text of *Bihishti Zewar* (Heavenly Ornaments) that was written by Maulana [Ashraf Ali] Thanawi in India in the early part of the twentieth century.[58]

Khan's statement, that the recent works in metal, such as the corset, chastity belt, and body armor, were created while she was deeply engaged in the study of the *Bihishti Zewar*—a text written in Urdu by the renowned Islamic scholar and Sufi Ashraf Ali Thanawi (1864–1943) at the beginning of the twentieth century and addressed to women, outlining a reformist and scripturalist Islam—is certainly intriguing.[59] What is the possible relationship between obsolete European implements that seek to shape and control the female body and modern Islamic legal, social, and ethical injunctions for women? Is modern, scripturalist Islam simply being equated with medieval European repression, torture, and confinement? Or, as the use of such devices by S&M, bondage, and other subcultures in the West suggests, have these devices today primarily acquired the aura of a transgressive fetish for the artist?

FIGURE 4.15. *Naiza H. Khan,* Bullet Proof Vest, Body Armour/Lingerie, Chastity Belt, *2006–7. Galvanized steel, metal, and fabric with zipper.* Bullet Proof Vest, *52 × 42 × 20 cm;* Body Armour/Lingerie, *33 × 15 × 10 cm;* Chastity Belt, *36 × 30 × 30 cm. (Courtesy Naiza H. Khan.)*

Naiza Khan's art practice since the early 2000s has not been limited to the studio but has been articulated in relation to external contexts. Situating her formal practice critically in relation to her references provides us with a key insight into her ongoing project. The outside references in the artist's works are often split along two axes, the visual and the discursive, which include textual and cultural references of South Asian Islam and also to art beyond South Asia or Islam. In addition to corsets and chastity belts, other references to images are included in her works, such as *Bilqis/Bathsheba* (2006)—in its

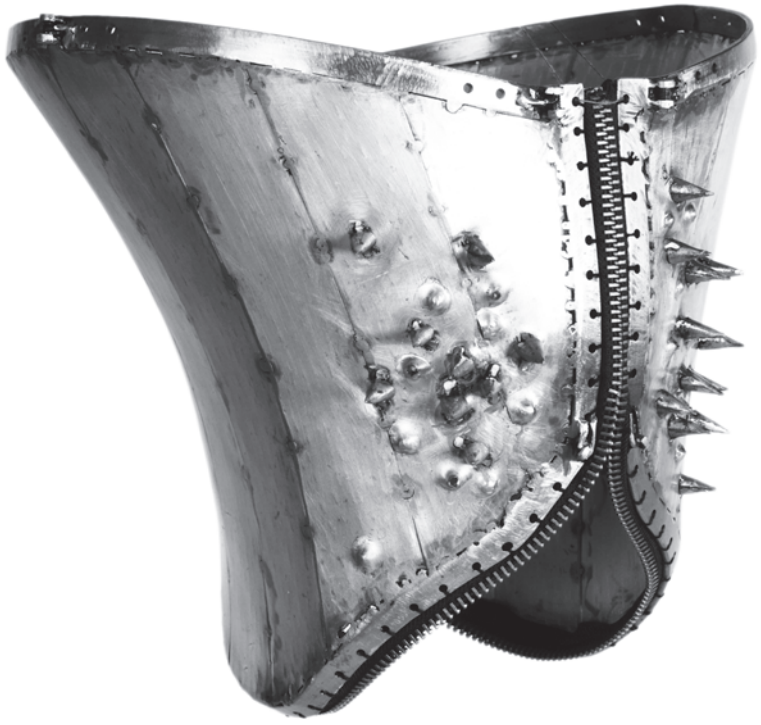


FIGURE 4.16. *Naiza H. Khan,* Pelvic Armour II, *2008. Galvanized steel and zipper. 40 × 32 × 30 cm. (Courtesy Naiza H. Khan.)*

sensual handling of the female figure that nevertheless foregrounds the density and opacity of the body and which figuratively echoes Rembrandt's *Bathsheba* (1654) and *Hendrickje Bathing in a River* (1654) (Plate 19). The biblical story of Bathsheba tells of transgressive sexual desire. Other figurative works from the European Renaissance and the Baroque era that Khan alludes to include *Susanna and the Elders*, another biblical theme about voyeurism and the refusal by Susanna of the sexual advances of the Elders, which was depicted by numerous painters, famously by Artemisia Gentileschi in 1610. Khan has also paid homage to the Japanese masters of the "floating world," such as Kitagawa Utamaro (1753–1808). She has created an abstracted reinterpretation in *Dream of Awabi* (2000) and also directly "quoted," in her silkscreen *Two Corsets* (2005) (Plate 20), Katsushika Hokusai's *The Dream of the Fisherman's Wife* (ca. 1820), which depicts a transgressive sexual encounter between a woman and an octopus. These visual references evoke well-established artistic traditions that visually depicted the female figure in complex psychologi-

cal and sexual dynamics. But they are also artistic traditions distant in time, place, and tradition and cannot be easily inhabited by the artist or her audience. These referents are therefore primarily allegorical.[60]

Absent from Naiza Khan's referents is the female figure from Islamic or Mughal art, or even from the art of Buddhist and Hindu temple sculpture, which certainly abounds in depictions of the female form. Nor is there any reference to lived vernacular and local ceremonies at Sufi shrines, to the lives of *hijras*, or to other discrepant practices that persist into the present, despite the legal and moral strictures of modern South Asian Islam. Even when on occasion her works do have "local" referents, these are not directly cited but instead are visually allegorized.[61] Nor do we find in her work any reference to the predicament of the female body as subject to relentless social expectations in the modern West, a theme that has been explored by numerous Western contemporary artists and photographers such as Vanessa Beecroft and Lauren Greenfield.[62] Absent also from Khan's works are direct references to controversies regarding veiling and the head scarf—including the *dupatta*, the *burqa*, the *chador*, the *hijab*, the *niqab*, and so on—that have become a staple of Western media representations of Muslim women but are also of concern internally in Muslim countries such as Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Afghanistan and, especially since the Zia era, in Pakistan itself. Although these references might be overtly missing, they nevertheless remain the structuring absence around which the extended work of the artist coheres.

Naiza Khan's local references, however, are not primarily visual but are instead discursive and textual. She does not directly draw, for example, from South Asian miniature painting, Hindu and Buddhist iconography, or veiling practices, but from language-based cultural and scripturalist texts. One finds these discursive citations in her works from 1993, inspired by the long late nineteenth-century poem lamenting Muslim decline, the *Musaddas*, of Altaf Husain Hali, and in the titles of works such as *Nine Parts of Desire* (1997) and *Heavenly Ornaments* (2005).[63] These works frequently refer to situated texts of modern South Asian Islam. Others, such as *Tayyar Intezar Khamosh* (2006) and the silkscreen print *Khamosh* (2006) (Figure 4.17), inscribe commanding statements in Urdu (*be prepared*, *be patient*, *be silent*), whose source and addressee nevertheless remain elusive or blank and therefore allegorical. The contestation in Muslim and non-Muslim countries (such as France and the United Kingdom) over the visibility of the Muslim woman's body is increasingly no longer a matter of everyday lived practices subject only to local approval or censure but a debate that has emerged into the full public and juridical purview of the nation-state and has in fact become global, due to

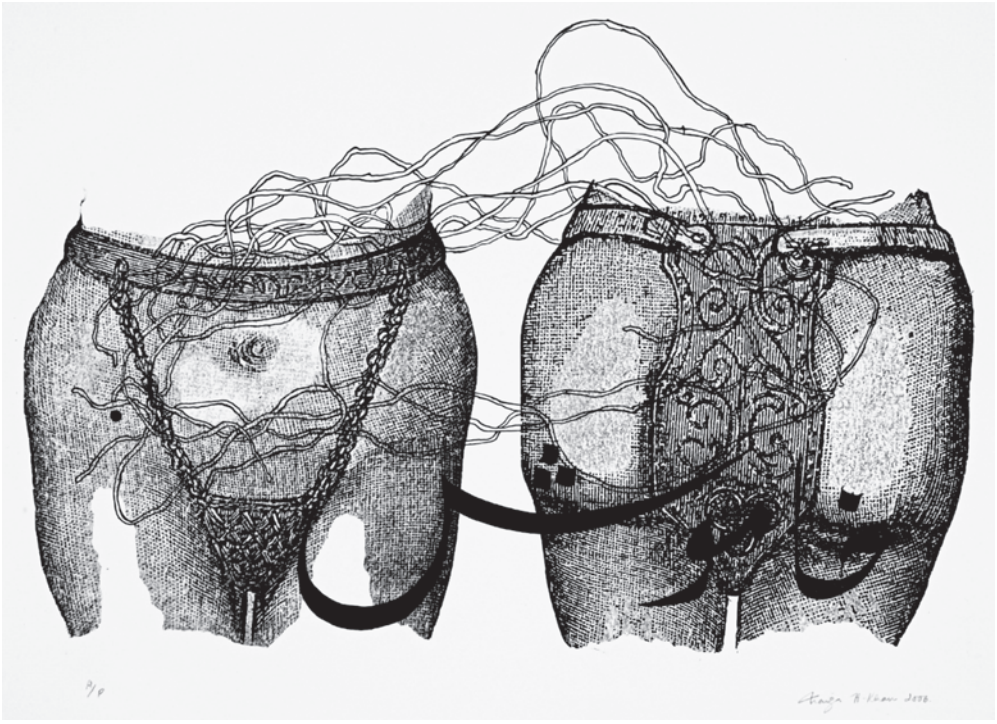


FIGURE 4.17. *Naiza H. Khan,* Khamosh (Silence)*, 2006. Screen print. 57 × 76 cm. (Courtesy Rossi & Rossi, London, and Naiza H. Khan.)*

its visibility in international media. As such, the debate over the body of the contemporary Muslim woman cannot be folded back into localized everyday practices that are simply lived in relative nonawareness of and noncompliance with scripturalist and discursive norms.

Today's South Asian Muslim woman's body and subjectivity is thus a product of an extended process of modernity that has been unfolding since the nineteenth century. As the Introduction has argued, Islamic reform movements in South Asia that have been active since the nineteenth century were predicated on the loss of Muslim political power in the wake of British colonialism, when Muslim morality and law could no longer even conceived to be enforceable by the *'ulama* or the state. Reform movements effectively deployed lithographic print media in Urdu to produce a vast literature of texts that sought to create an individuated ethical and moral Muslim character to compensate for the loss of sovereignty and address the rise of mass society.[64] Since the later nineteenth century, Muslims in South Asia, on the one hand, developed modernist educational institutions, most prominently

a college at Aligarh, and, on the other, new seminaries for scripturalist and theological interpretation, such as the school at Deoband. Both the Aligarh modernizers and the Deobandi scholars addressed the "woman question" as an important facet of their reform agendas.[65] Of the many works produced in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, however—virtually all written by male reformers—"Thanawi's *Bihishti Zewar* was the textbook to end all textbooks, theoretically containing between its covers all the information a Muslim wife needed to know."[66] It is still widely considered to contain indispensable advice for young women—versions of this text and discussions about it can be found today on the internet, for example.[67] Barbara Metcalf has argued that *The Bihishti Zewar* addressed itself to the reform of Muslim women, viewing them as equally capable of becoming educated and moral agents as men, by shedding abhorrent local customs and adhering more closely to scripturalist practices that Thanawi interpreted for the early twentieth-century *ashraf* (respectable) Muslim context. Notably, the title of the work is itself allegorical, observes Metcalf: "The 'heavenly ornaments' of Thanawi's title, one might add, are not women themselves as adornments or ornaments of domestic life. There is no notion that women are the Victorian 'angel of the house,' that in their protected sphere they rise to a higher and purer morality. . . . The 'ornaments' in Thanawi's work are rather a metaphor for the virtues both women and men must cultivate in themselves, the virtues that will earn them the pearls and bracelets of heaven (Qur'an 22:23)."[68] Nevertheless, by discursively rendering women as moral and perfectible agents, Thanawi helped articulate a paradox of subjectivation with respect to traditional authority—why should women then conform to the authority of men or of the *'ulama*, if they indeed possess a potential moral and educational capability equal to them? The *Bihishti Zewar* thus enacts a crisis it cannot resolve. Thanawi's position regarding women's uplift through their own moral efforts is interrupted and displaced, between articulating its need but also by condemning its potentially threatening dimensions. One manner in which this crisis is visible is Thanawi's dismissal of all Persianate humanist texts, all poetry, and virtually all novels, even didactic ones, as corrupting (possibly due to the presence of strong women characters in the latter).[69] By providing a list in the *Bihishti Zewar* of ninety-nine books—he disapproved of twenty-eight—Thanawi, however, played out the dilemma all external censorship faces when it publicly proscribes a work. He endowed it with longer public life and greater influence and gave it the aura of forbidden fruit.[70]

Thanawi's text has remained remarkably influential even today. But since the 1930s, the Progressive Writers Association, informed by the legacies of

realism, Marx, and Freud, arrived at another conjuncture of the self. Muslim authors—including distinguished women authors—writing short stories and poetry in Urdu, played a leading role in the rise of progressive writing in South Asia, not by returning to Indo-Persian humanism, reformist Islam, or Victorian morality, but by foregrounding gender and sexual exploitation and introducing narratives of prostitution and even lesbianism as being common in society.[71] The Progressive Writers Association offered a counternarrative to the moralist views of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century reformers by their frank and scandalous writings and made it possible to go beyond the stark moralist dichotomies of the earlier reformers, but they did not fully displace the influence of the *Bihishti Zewar*, especially in the educated middle and lower middle classes.

Finally, an important development closer to Naiza Khan's career from the 1990s on was the remarkable rise of organized and public resistance by human rights activists and feminists to Zia's Islamization during the 1980s, which included a number of prominent women lawyers and poets and artists such as Salima Hashmi and Lala Rukh.[72] Contestation over the public visibility of women during the Zia era can be understood also through the paradox of subjectivation. It is commonly understood that during the Zia years, in the late 1970s and the 1980s, numerous rights for women that had been enshrined in Pakistani law were "rolled back" by the regime's Islamization process. Women certainly became subject to overt state repression during the Zia years, but Shahnaz Rouse has shown that this sanction is reactive of a more complex shift in the public role of women. Although men had long controlled the private sphere of women's lives, discursive control over the public sphere was instituted as well during the Zia era, as seen in repressive legal injunctions and formulations of proper attire for women in the media.[73] Not accidentally, it was precisely during these years that women had gained much greater public visibility. As Farida Shaheed has noted: "The Zia decade, marked by retrogression and the rhetoric of the religious right, saw the largest number of women entering the formal labor market, and the informal sector. Female applicants for higher education increased. In urban areas, even as dress codes became more uniform, an unprecedented number and new class of women started appearing in public places such as parks and restaurants."[74] The Zia regime's measures were thus not simply attempting to "roll back" existing prerogatives for women; they were also striving to exert state power to control an essentially new phenomenon, the emerging presence of women in the public arena. But the very attempt itself paradoxically amplified the emergence of the publicly visible female body as an issue that

could not be simply "rolled back." The increased scrutiny of, and contestation over, the public female body in Pakistan since the 1980s marks this important shift. Naiza Khan did not participate in the 1980s women's resistance movements, because she began her career later, but these movements nevertheless have influenced her work. Salima Hashmi has perceptively noted that during the 1970s and 1980s, "not a single woman artist took up calligraphy or changed her mode of working to bring it in line with official State policy."[75] By contrast, Khan's adoption of calligraphic forms (Figures 4.10, 4.17) suggests that her work seeks a more incisive and more extended intervention in public discourses than the works of the earlier generation of women artists, who had refused to occupy the calligraphic terrain due to its connection with Zia's Islamization process.

Naiza Khan's work demonstrates that freedom for women is not a simple matter of transgressing or overthrowing repressive social mores, since the very delineation of what is possible to accomplish as an agent emerges within the discursive constraints of the social order. To grasp this, one needs an understanding of subject formation under modern conditions of power. Recent scholarship, inspired by Michel Foucault's late works, has traced how under modernity since the nineteenth century a dense matrix of institutional power exerted at a microscopic level throughout the social fabric has shaped the modern subject. Saba Mahmood succinctly summarizes this insight:

> Power, according to Foucault, cannot be understood solely on the model of domination as something possessed and deployed by individuals or sovereign agents over others, with a singular intentionality, structure, or location that presides over its rationality and execution. Rather, power is to be understood as a strategic relation of force that permeates life and is productive of new forms of desires, objects, relations, and discourses. Secondly, the subject, argues Foucault, does not precede power relations, in the form of an individuated consciousness, but is produced through these relations, which form the necessary conditions of its possibility. Central to his formulation is what Foucault calls the paradox of *subjectivation*: the very process and conditions that secure a subject's subordination are also the means by which she becomes a self-conscious identity and agent.[76]

Khan's works insistently remind us of this paradox of subjectivation. In order for the voice *and the body* of the woman to emerge into public space from a condition of invisibility and subalternaity, its presence must be recognized and shaped by discursive norms. Her works, resulting from the artist's rigor and commitment to their extended formal development, are thus deeply

ethical and political. Feminist artists, including Louise Bourgeois, Eva Hesse, Kiki Smith, Mona Hatoum, Cathy de Monchaux, and others, have explored the predicament of the female body in their sculptural, performance-based, and installation-based works since the 1960s, marking a radical departure from the objectification of the female form in Western art. Deploying unconventional materials, these feminist artists instead explored the body as a deeply unsettling biological entity that refused the objectifying gaze. Khan's works expand upon and relay this feminist practice into the Pakistani/Islamic context, by expressly creating references to the body of discursive debate relevant to modern South Asian Muslims.

The artist foregrounds the unrelenting processual nature of her experiments by her use of drawing as primary exploratory medium. Her sketched figures appear inherently incomplete, and thus become allegories, in that they do not provide us with sealed and finished figures and objects. Although her drawings are graphically rich, they remain tentative, probing, and compulsively worked over. They refuse to enact a false synthesis by creating "finished" works that might suggest that an end to this insistent exploratory process has come by way of a harmonious resolution of women's public identity: "I made some images in my little book in July last year [2006]. These were drawings of 'bullet proof vests.' I was intrigued by them, and felt they needed to be made in metal. At the same time they felt like something very soft, close to the body, like fabric. . . . The idea of trapping and protection comes together in these pieces. An ambiguous thought, not sure where one idea stops and the other begins . . . something so prevalent in our society."[77]

Demonstrating a nuanced understanding of the question of subjectivity of the (female) body, Naiza Khan does not create works that simply claim a putative realm of freedom or liberation for women living under repressive social and religious strictures, as the conception of freedom must itself be situated in particular social and discursive frameworks. The leaking, unraveling, and porous female body fails to conform to a bounded form or refuses to recognize the limits of its skin and needs to be coaxed into compliance by an elaborate physical, discursive, and juridical apparatus. The body articulates its form by arming and shaping itself in relation to this apparatus, which, by subjugating its excess, simultaneously enables its definition. This signifies the dilemma of subjectivation: without this social apparatus, the body itself ceases to exist as an entity that can inhabit the modern public sphere with a legible, normative voice. Naiza Khan's works recognize these imperatives but also attend to the protesting body as discursive violence is enacted upon it. Her insistent and continuous return to this question thus recognizes the

centrality but also the intractability of the dilemma of women's public voice, which cannot be extricated from its social demarcation. Her choice of executing recent works in metal suggests that this dilemma has only intensified in recent years.

Naiza Khan's insistent and repetitive foregrounding of the question of the body in discursive frameworks also deftly avoids appeals to premodern South Asian identities that are usually held up as zones of freedom from discursive scripturalism. South Asian Sufi practices have been viewed as a zone of tolerance and harmony for some time and now are increasingly seen as a counterweight to extremism engendered by Wahabi influences, beginning in the 1970s. However, the move toward scripturalist Islam cannot simply be explained by top-down Arabicized ideological indoctrination but requires seeing both Sufism and scripturalism as historically situated and in mutating social frameworks. Not only is the equation of the whole category of Sufism with nonviolence historically untenable, but more recently, as Ayesha Siddiqa has noted, Sufi institutions in Pakistan have been subject to extensive governmental manipulation, and many Sufis and their descendants have over the last few decades become associated with a corrupt and hierarchical feudal political order. "The path to God and spiritualism also means that people can only get access through the *pir* [saint], which in turn means negotiating through the cronies or *khalifas* (religious assistants) of the *pir*." Not only have emergent trading and smaller capitalist groups shifted their support toward scripturalism, because it requires no intermediaries who are also seen as associated with the rural and feudal political dominance of Pakistani politics, but Salafi approaches also hold a powerful appeal for the marginalized. Thus, in many cases, "Wahabi and Deobandi Islam appear [as] an alternative to the dispossessed, especially the youth." Significantly, Siddiqa notes that scripturalism is also viewed as being more *modern* than Sufism.[78]

For these reasons, Khan's refusal to evoke references to South Asian and Islamic *visual* artifacts denies us an easy avenue of escape into a romanticized premodern South Asian or Islamic past—localized Sufi practices, the glories of Mughal tolerance, and lived syncretistic harmony between Hindus and Muslims—which is said to have existed before the emergence of modern identities. This is not to suggest that these projections and practices cannot be attractive or compelling aspirations for individuals and groups, nor to claim that a persistent gap does not exist between norms and lived practices of modern individuals and groups. Nor is it intended to minimize the appeal of Westernized lifestyles, which are by now inextricably part of the lives of many South Asian Muslims. It is, however, to take seriously the implications

of the South Asian Muslim reformist project unfolding now for over a century, which strives to compare such practices in relation to its moral imperatives. Even when modern lived practices might remain at considerable variance from the discursive and scripturalist ideals, they nevertheless have become subject to judgment by these norms, and this is not a process that appears to be reversible. In this respect, the premodern or vernacular syncretistic utopia is as unattainable as a *public norm* today as the Japanese "floating world" of the eighteenth century or the place of the body in Renaissance and Baroque Europe.

Moreover, by her avoidance of images of the Muslim veil and also of the contemporary Western body, the artist refuses to be distracted by the charged, yet superficial media debates that equate the modern Muslim veil with subjugation, or by the reverse, equally superficial, arguments by apologists who claim that the veiled woman is "freer" than the Westernized female body under the thrall of mediatized and spectacularized sexuality. The temporal and geographic distancing, the allegorical thrust of the artist's work, is thus of critical importance. This is a more responsible artistic practice, rather than that of simply attacking the *burqa* or the *Bihishti Zewar* for "patriarchy" in a rarefied gallery setting where viewers come from elite socioeconomic backgrounds in which the *Bihishti Zewar*, in any case, is largely not followed. The effects of influential and normative texts such as the *Bihishti Zewar* are arguably far more complex and are better seen as important works of disciplining the self in order to create modern South Asian Muslim subjects. Once this microlevel awareness of body regulation becomes discursively normative, any contestation over it does not mean ignoring or escaping it, an impossibility, but rather working through its fractures for possibilities of articulating other norms, a patient and long-term project at best. Naiza Khan's work precisely does not offer an easy way out of this dilemma—she has allegorically yet starkly framed the "paradox of subjectivation" with this body of work. By the enactment of allegory, Khan is able to concentrate her efforts on exploring the persistent underlying dilemma of subject formation, in which subjugation to the norm also opens up the possibility of articulation. The welding points on the metal armatures are further allegorized as *Heavenly Ornaments*, suggesting that the terrible beauty of the violent forging of the metal joint is a necessary accomplice for expression and voice (Figures 4.15, 4.16). The works in metal do appear to offer a choice—the ability to wear them or discard them at will.[79] But this choice is essentially an impossible one, in that it is situated between the inarticulate, excessive, and private body and the normative female body, which is increasingly public and visible but is forged by

discursive norms that allow it to speak only by simultaneously working both violence and protection upon its bodily excess. The engagement with textual articulations of legal and ethical traditions in Khan's recent work may well mark a broader shift in bringing contemporary practice to address the growing strength of scripturalist Islam that is shaping not only key dimensions of Pakistani public life but also Islamic practices in a globalizing arena.

CONTEMPORARY ART AND GLOBALIZATION OF ISLAM

Rasheed Araeen and Naiza Khan are *contemporary* artists working in the era of globalization and postmodernism, yet, by the seriousness of their extended commitment to form and meaning, their artistic projects draw from the strength and discipline characteristic of modernism proper. The artists have engaged deeply with questions of emergent Muslim subjectivities in a divided and imperfect world, articulating displacements and aporias of subjectivation and refraining from providing easy resolutions to personal or social complexities. The question of Muslim selfhood as a *public* conundrum has gathered momentum since the 1970s with the revolution in Iran, Islamization in Pakistan, the 1980s *jihad* in Afghanistan, and the presence of increasing numbers of Muslims in the West. This publicness was further precipitated by the controversy surrounding the publication of Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses* (1989) and by the new role of the Islamic world as the geopolitical "other" after the demise of communism in 1991, further catalyzed by the events of September 11, 2001. By the *contemporaneity* of their artistic modalities, both of these artists have abstracted and conceptualized the question of Islamic art in relation to values far beyond mere fidelity to forms and materials. Much of their work, although not addressing predicaments that are limited to Muslim subjects alone, nevertheless bears particular salience for Muslims with respect to their belonging and participation in the contemporary globalizing public arena.

EPILOGUE THE REALM OF THE CONTEMPORARY

This study has analyzed the work of selected artists from the early twentieth century until the present, offering neither a comprehensive survey nor complete readings of the artists considered here. Rather, it has traced a salient genealogy of Muslim artistic subjectivity with reference to nationalism, modernism, cosmopolitanism, and "tradition," arguing that the artists' concerns cannot be fully grasped without situating them in the longer trajectory of the intellectual history of Muslim South Asia from the early modern era. "Tradition" includes Indo-Persian cultural cosmopolitanism of the early modern era, reformist and modernizing currents from the nineteenth century onward, struggles over the meaning of nationalism since the later nineteenth century, poetic and literary developments extending well into the twentieth century, and progressive cultural politics during the middle third of the twentieth century. "Islamic art," which began as an orientalist discipline without secure foundation in Islamic discursive traditions, nevertheless also furnishes the modern artist with a kind of tradition, which he or she appropriates and refashions to address personal and social predicaments. Informed by postcolonial theory and globalization studies and viewing modernism itself as transnational, this study shows how twentieth-century modernism and recent developments in global contemporary art provide another important set of frameworks for understanding the artists' works. South Asian Muslim modernist practice seeks an adequate discursive ground but never quite secures it; this search characterizes an important facet of its modernism and its contemporaneity and contributes to its ongoing dynamism.

With the recent rise of a mediatized global Islam, classical and modern Islamic art has also recently enjoyed enhanced visibility, especially in prominent Western museological frameworks, with the art and artists usually placed in a liberal humanist framework, in opposition to "fundamentalism."[1] However, as this study hopes to have demonstrated, this is a reductive reading, and, indeed, as Finbarr Flood has cogently noted, "what is new and particularly disturbing" about this development "is the way in which the objects of Islamic art are increasingly co-opted into an emergent (if embryonic) exhibitionary regime that not only aims to project a model of peaceful coexistence but to locate and provide an appropriate model of Islam itself."[2] By contrast,

the arguments presented here demonstrate that a more adequate account of modern and contemporary "Islamic art" can neither reduce it to fidelity to past form, media, or spiritualism nor render it as a mere reflection in the value-mirror of Western liberalism.[3] Neither do aesthetic, ethical, and political effects of emergent artistic subjectivities necessarily fully conform to, nor even primarily aim to openly resist, existing hegemonic values. Beyond the urgency of the present, their deeper significance lies precisely in meditating upon the dislocations of self and society and in fostering new imaginations for inhabiting the present and the future.

This epilogue ends with a selective account of emergent practices, necessarily brief due to reasons of space and also because their full significance is not yet evident. A schematic summary can easily become tangential and reductive; nevertheless, one can identify two salient threads from the last two decades—the continued interrogation of "tradition" (examined in some depth in this study) and the exploration of the "popular," or the "everyday," which still awaits a detailed study. Until the early 1990s, artistic practice was primarily late modernist, focusing mostly on easel-based oil or watercolor painting. Its modes encompassed formalism and abstraction, calligraphic modernism, landscapes, and deployment of regional or historical symbols. Its achievements included the fashioning of a sense of deep artistic subjectivity, the transformation of the language of transnational modernism to create works that provided metaphoric analogues to existential and social dilemmas, and the formation of a field of modern art within patronage structures, audiences, and institutions. Most art moved between studio-gallery-collector circuits, but some modernist artists, like Zainul Abedin and Sadequain, created murals, public works, and critical statements, striving to expand audiences through social interventions and create new forms of address.

A consciously political artist who grew up in Junagarh (now in India) and became familiar with Hindu mythology as a child, A. R. Nagori (born 1938) taught for many years at the University of Sind in Hyderabad. He has produced an important body of expressionist paintings deploying mythological and figurative elements executed in gestural, intense colors. His works have critiqued social injustice, including oppression under the military rule of General Zia. He has also focused on landless peasants and marginalized tribes serving as bonded labor under a cruel feudal order, celebrating their resilient bodies within the austere landscape of Sind.[4]

Since the 1970s, a constellation of crises precipitated the emergence of contemporary practice in the early 1990s: state support for Islamist politics

during General Zia's reign (1977–88); the rise of women's activism (including prominent women artists such as Salima Hashmi and Lala Rukh) in the 1980s resisting Zia's directives against women's rights; the restoration of an unstable democracy (1988–99); International Monetary Fund– and World Bank–led privatization and the growth of sprawling megacities; large migrations of skilled and unskilled labor to the Arab world and the West; the arrival of global satellite TV in the early 1990s and, later, the spread of the internet; and changes in patronage and audience brought on by international curators, biennials, and galleries. As seen in the work of Rasheed Araeen and Naiza Khan in chapter 4, the emergence of newer media and postmedium contemporary approaches has also arguably enabled a more sustained critical and direct social address than was possible with modernism earlier. Group exhibitions, especially in Britain, such as *Intelligent Rebellion: Women Artists of Pakistan* (1994),[5] *Tampered Surface: Six Artists from Pakistan* (1995),[6] *Pakistan: Another Vision* (2000),[7] *ArtSouthAsia* (2002),[8] and *Beyond the Page: Contemporary Art from Pakistan* (2006),[9] have signposted this development of contemporary practice. Artist, author, teacher, and curator Salima Hashmi has played a key role in fostering contemporary art. In Islamabad, the National Art Gallery finally opened in 2007, after decades of planning and struggle. Its inaugural exhibition showcased numerous artists' works from a variety of curatorial viewpoints. Other institutional developments include the artists' collective VASL, based in Karachi and Lahore but with an active web presence, in which artist Naiza Khan has played a leading role.[10] In a series of exhibitions, curator Atteqa Ali has shown the work of emerging artists in the United States.[11] And Green Cardamom, an arts organization based in London, has been engaged in developing the careers of artists from Pakistan and the broader transnational region of South and West Asia and their diasporas in a professional manner.[12]

Broader exchange of artists, exhibitions, and works is overall a welcome development in the current period, leading to pluralism and diverse growth of artistic praxis. Artists today participate far more intensively in a globalized cultural sphere, in which Pakistani art is inextricably linked to diasporic practices, international megaexhibitions, and promotion by Western galleries. The Indian curator Pooja Sood has supported many such interactions within South Asia.[13] *Mappings: Shared Histories, A Fragile Self* (1997), an exhibition that brought three artists each from Pakistan and India to comment on the fiftieth anniversary of independence and partition, toured both countries.[14] *Aar Paar* (ongoing since 2000) has bypassed official restrictions by sending works electronically across borders to be produced and displayed locally.[15]

And the group exhibition *Beyond Borders: Art from Pakistan* (2005) brought a wide range of modern and contemporary art to Indian attention.[16]

One might trace the rise of contemporary Pakistani art to the crucibles of Karachi and Lahore. A city pregnant with memories of Mughal art and architecture, Lahore is also home to key colonial and postcolonial educational institutions, examined in chapter 2. More recently, the School of Visual Arts at Beaconhouse National University has opened. Thus much contemporary practice emerging from Lahore has continued to engage with "tradition," most visibly in the rise of new miniature painting from the early 1990s at the National College of Art. Although miniature painting had been taught at the National College of Art for decades, by the 1980s, with encouragement from Zahoorul Akhlaque—a student of Shakir Ali and an artist interested in the miniature's conceptual architecture—its pedagogy had converged with other aesthetic and social frames. By the mid-1990s, students began fracturing the traditional narrative and space of the miniature, which already possessed considerable narrative, arabesque, and allegorical potential. A generation of artists trained in the exacting Persian, Mughal, Rajput, and Pahari styles emerged, only to transform these traditions to critically interrogate contemporary uncertainties, often in productive relation with other media.[17]

Imran Qureshi (born 1972) has painted miniature forms directly on architectural spaces, escaping the confines of the page and rendering its transcendent form into everyday space (Plate 21). He has also played a key role in training the next generation of miniature artists at the National College of Art. Aisha Khalid (born 1972) has created works that explore questions of veiling and gender and their relation to interiority, domesticity, and the decorative in a compelling and urgent manner. In her *Gul-e-lalah* (2004), the minimalist space and the repetition of an arabesque pattern that also recalls colonial floor tiles creates an enclosure from which no escape appears to be possible (Plate 22). The figure of the *burqa*-clad woman itself is under erasure, melding with the tulip and merging into the decorative background: however, the red cast of the entire work possibly signifies anger, menstrual blood, and emergence of the carnal body from its decorative enclosure. Khalid's work may thus be seen as contributing to the ongoing investigation of Muslim subjectivity by *practice*, relaying the miniature form that Chughtai reappropriated in modernity with reference to the carnal visibility of the body explored in Naiza Khan's work.

Chicago-based Saira Wasim (born 1975) deploys her striking technical skills to create potent political allegories, reminding us that many Mughal works were intended to serve as allegories of the elevated status of Mughal

emperors. Her works have addressed religious and political hypocrisy in Pakistan and the state of the Muslim world in globalization. Her reliance on an "obsolete" painting technique precisely serves to create the temporal and aesthetic distance from pervasive media imagery, which allows her paintings to be read as allegories rather than as cartoons or parodies. Her works are fully cognizant of political representations circulated by the electronic media, but, by retaining a formal distance, she prompts us to question whether the events we see every day on television are world-historical or utterly banal and cynical instances of religious and political manipulation. For example, contemporary leaders of Muslim nations are assembled together in her *Round Table Conference* (2006) (Plate 23). The work recalls the impotent, largely ceremonial gatherings periodically organized by the fifty-six-nation Organization of the Islamic Conference to address contemporary issues. In Wasim's portrayal, the politicians, meticulously dressed in their formal attire, doze around a beautiful table decorated with "Islamic art": calligraphy, ornament, and miniature painting. Its center depicts an allegorical image of globalizing violence, whose theatricality is reinforced by the mocking figures of Ronald McDonald in the four corners.[18] Significantly, many of these artists are dispersed across the world, participating in contemporary globalized art discourses. Initiated by a workshop organized by Imran Qureshi in the wake of developments following September 11, 2001, the exhibition *Karkhana: A Contemporary Collaboration* (2005–6) has mapped the globalizing dispersal of the contemporary miniature by exhibiting the solo and experimental collaborative work of six young miniature artists living on three continents (Figure E.1).[19]

The contemporary miniature is often claimed as being in an unbroken continuity with tradition. However, as this study has argued, South Asian Muslim identity in modern history has been too complex and overdetermined to be easily confined in a national register. The return of the miniature today is neither fully in unbroken continuity with tradition nor fully new in its acknowledgment of a complex genealogy, although its playful and ironic potential is certainly a new development. But, in many ways, it parallels the revival of the miniature by Chughtai, who also negotiated cosmopolitan frameworks even while articulating an idea of a Lahore-based Muslim art. The Chughtaian and the contemporary miniatures draw upon the legacies of Mughal painting, Indian vernacular painting traditions, and postmodern and contemporary practices, to create a new type of postnational Muslim aesthetic. And certainly the miniature arises either too early, before the founding of Pakistan, or too late, when the great national drive for modernization from the 1950s to the 1970s has been exhausted, to be unproblematically considered

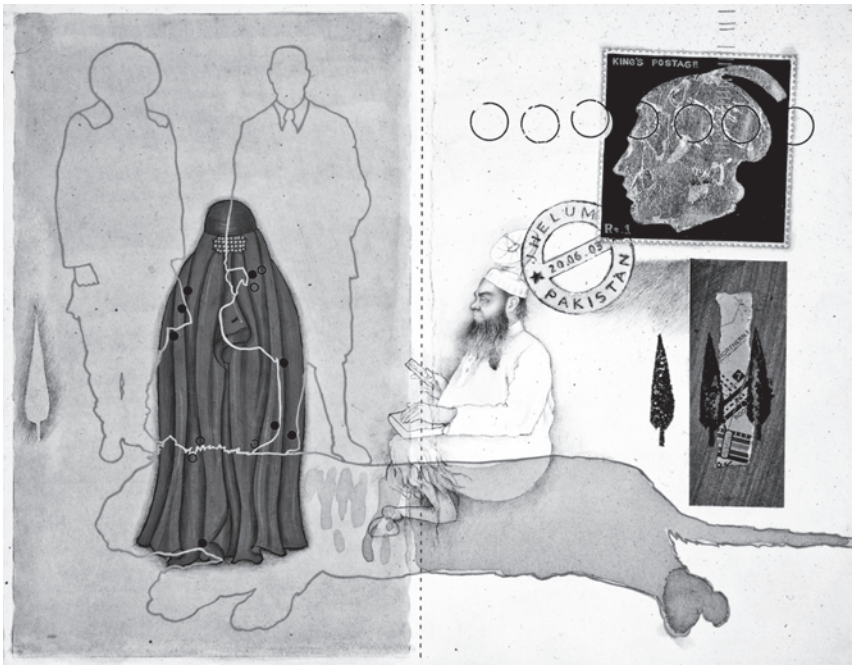


FIGURE E.1. *Hasnat Mehmood, Aisha Khalid, Nusra Latif Qureshi, Saira Wasim, Talha Rathore, and Muhammad Imran Qureshi,* Untitled 4 *(from the Karkhana project), 2003. Gouache, mixed media on* wasli *(paper). 18.1 × 23.4 cm. (Courtesy the artists and Green Cardamom, London.)*

as national art. The miniature today also unwittingly re-creates Chughtai's object of longing, the Lahore School of Painting, whose geographic locale is now, ironically, globally dispersed.

A port city that grew uncontrollably, becoming a megalopolis and a commercial capital, Karachi possesses few historical markers. Democracy was restored to Pakistan in 1988 but brought little relief to Karachi. During the manifold crises of the 1980s and 1990s—a severely depressed economy, rampant bloody violence between the government and identitarian political groups, and a charged atmosphere of threat permeating the streets—it became clear to some artists that, although the nation-state was an important frame against which much of this unfolded, it was but one actor engaged in struggles that were local as well as transnational. A critical artistic modality striving to address contemporary predicaments emerged in a few practitioners. Along with Elizabeth Dadi and others, as founders of the so-called Karachi Pop,[20] my own work during the early 1990s began to engage with the "popular," as it was a realm in which struggles that were foreclosed in

formal public spheres reemerged. We attempted to articulate a postconceptual practice in dialogue with the vitality of popular urban visualities to create photography, sculpture, and installations commenting on the visual theatrics of violence and urban identity and serving as an oblique critique of official nationalism. And, as discussed in chapter 4, the Karachi-based artist Naiza Khan similarly ventured into popular urban motifs, with henna silhouettes of the female figure using intricate ornamental stencils. During the 1990s, when she also worked as an influential teacher in Karachi, Samina Mansuri (born 1956) painted organicist metaphors of the female body.[21] Her more recent work, executed in Canada and the United States, reconfigured the body as futuristic cyborg and posthuman figures within wall-drawing installations of architectural forms. For her MFA exhibition, at Carnegie Mellon University in 2009, Mansuri created an elaborate architectural sculptural installation of a ruined cityscape, which could be experienced only by video or from a viewing station, as if seen by aerial cartography, suggesting that much of our memory of the world today is produced through technology and media, which necessarily mediates our traumatic relation to war-torn places "such as Pakistan, Afghanistan, Palestine and Iraq" (Plate 24).[22]

The equating of Lahore with tradition and Karachi with the popular is, of course, schematic and often productively breached. For example, the exploration of masculinity has remained an abiding concern in much of the work of Lahore-based painter, printmaker, and installation artist, Anwar Saeed (born 1955).[23] He has also drawn on Greek, Hindu, and Muslim mythological and historical images to situate imbricated histories and to map tensions of contemporary everyday life. In his print *Different Possible Endings for a Story* (Plate 25), Saeed juxtaposes fragments of a calendar with images of the past—architectural ornament, Gandharan sculpture, and calligraphy in Arabic, Urdu, and Indic languages—along with contemporary images of artistic raw materials, violence, and nuclear blast sites. The work suggests that the unfolding future of South Asia remains fraught, caught between an ensemble of creative and destructive trajectories, yet also continues to be mutually dependent upon its diverse communities. The work, which was made in 1993, offers a salient critique of narrow ideologies of Pakistani "Islamic" nationalism that have sought to deny it its non-Muslim past and had become greatly magnified during the reign of General Zia in the 1980s.

Many Lahore-trained artists not formally trained in the miniature nevertheless deploy many of its conceptual modalities to engage with both "tradition" and the "popular." In this respect, Rashid Rana's (born 1968) work is significant.[24] His paintings during the period 2000–2003, such as *What Is So*

Pakistani about This Painting?, which combine Urdu and English scripts and banal images to deconstruct Pakistani art history—its persistent linguistic duality and its quest for a ground—nevertheless suggest that the history of Pakistani art has itself acquired the status of tradition for artists of Rana's generation. His later photographic mosaics—which digitally assemble dissonant images to compose larger images of nationalism or tradition, such as military parades, oriental carpets, or landscape paintings—deploy a miniaturist sensibility with a minimalist phenomenology of perception to index underlying dissonant conditions of everyday life subsumed by the overall harmonious image. *I Love Miniatures* (2002), which from a distance appears to be a Mughal portrait, dissolves into a mosaic of banal contemporary commercial signage from Lahore, situating the city within an exalted historical frame yet simultaneously insisting on its unbridgeable aesthetic and historical distance from the Mughal era (Plate 26).

Risham Syed (born 1969), who trained as a painter at the National College of Art in Lahore and the Royal College of Art in London, has imbricated painting and embroidery in her practice for several years. She learned embroidery and needlework growing up in Lahore, as part of a proper upbringing for girls inflected with Victorian reformist values inherited from the colonial era.[25] Her installation *Tent of Darius* (2009) (Plate 27) consists of five dilapidated army overcoats and a miniature painted copy of Charles Le Brun's *Queens of Persia at the Feet of Alexander* (1660–61).[26] The coats are probably discarded army uniforms from Europe, which the artist procured from a used clothing market in Lahore and had embroidered with floral patterns, medals, and a decorated alphabet. The journey of the coats and their worn state is evocative of the romance of military life that attracts young men (especially those from Jhelum, a poor region in Pakistan) and the sordid reality of war that consumes the very bodies of soldiers. The Baroque painting, which theatrically depicts the subservience of the Queen of Persia to the victorious Alexander, allegorizes contemporary global power imbalances. The number five has multiple connotations for the artist: it signifies the five senses and the five rivers that flow through the Punjab, and the number also has "Islamic" meanings, which include the number of prescribed daily prayers and the "human instincts that Sufi/Sikh preaching warns against, like lust, greed, envy."[27] Gender plays an ostensibly subservient yet central role in this complex work, which also incisively comments on art historical canonicity and its relation to contemporary everyday life in South and West Asia.[28]

The aporia of separation and belonging with reference to India has prominently emerged in much Pakistani contemporary practice. Many key Paki-

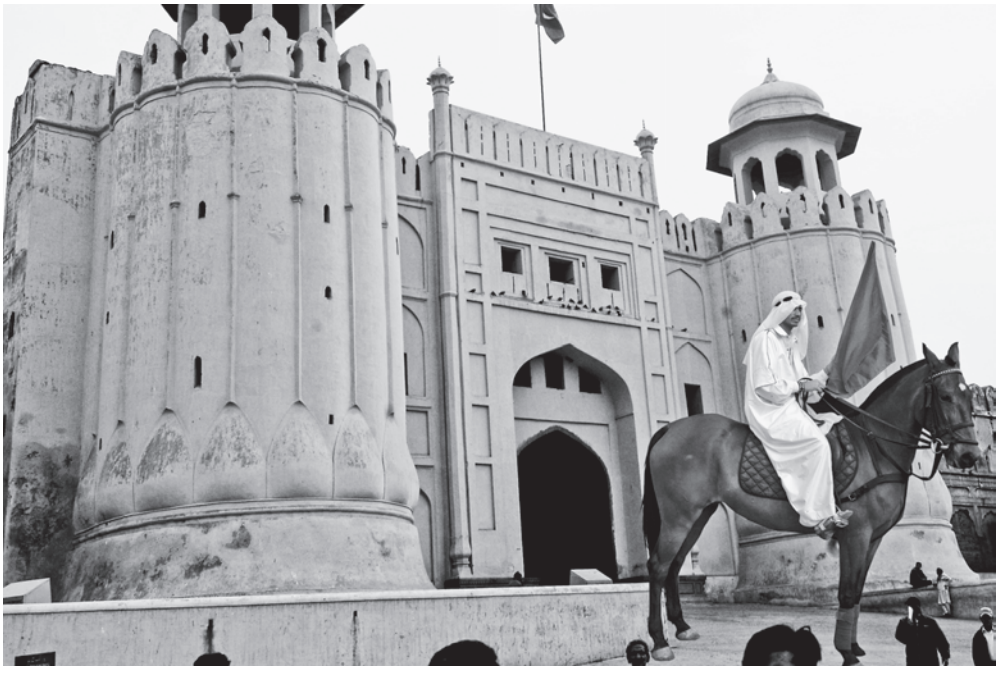


FIGURE E.2. *Bani Abidi, from the series* The Ghost of Mohammad Bin Qasim, *2006. Digital prints, 28 × 18.5 cm. (Courtesy Bani Abidi and Green Cardamom, London.)*

stani modernist artists, including Shakir Ali and Sadequain, were raised in India and retained numerous affiliations and memories. Artists from both countries occasionally traveled and exhibited across borders during the 1970s and 1980s, despite poor official relations. Suketu Mehta has provocatively noted that both nations are locked in an impossible relationship of "fatal" intimacy, in which mutual hostility and threat of destruction is symptomatic of their unbearable closeness.[29] Contemporary artists who explore Pakistan's complex ties to India thus do so without affirming either a forced harmony or a complete separation, but rather they retain or even sharpen the dialectical edge. These include Bani Abidi (born 1971), who divides her time between India and Pakistan and whose video installations and digital prints interrogate Pakistani nationalist myths at the popular level. Her photographic deconstruction of the mythology of the eighth-century Arab conqueror Muhammad bin Qasim, who is said to have first brought Islam to South Asia, is a case in point. *The Ghost of Mohammad Bin Qasim* (2005) (Figure E.2) also comments on the increasing Arab and Saudi influence on recent Pakistani public life, fueled by the petrodollar boom since the 1970s and the large presence of Pakistani blue- and white-collar guest workers in the Persian Gulf states.[30]

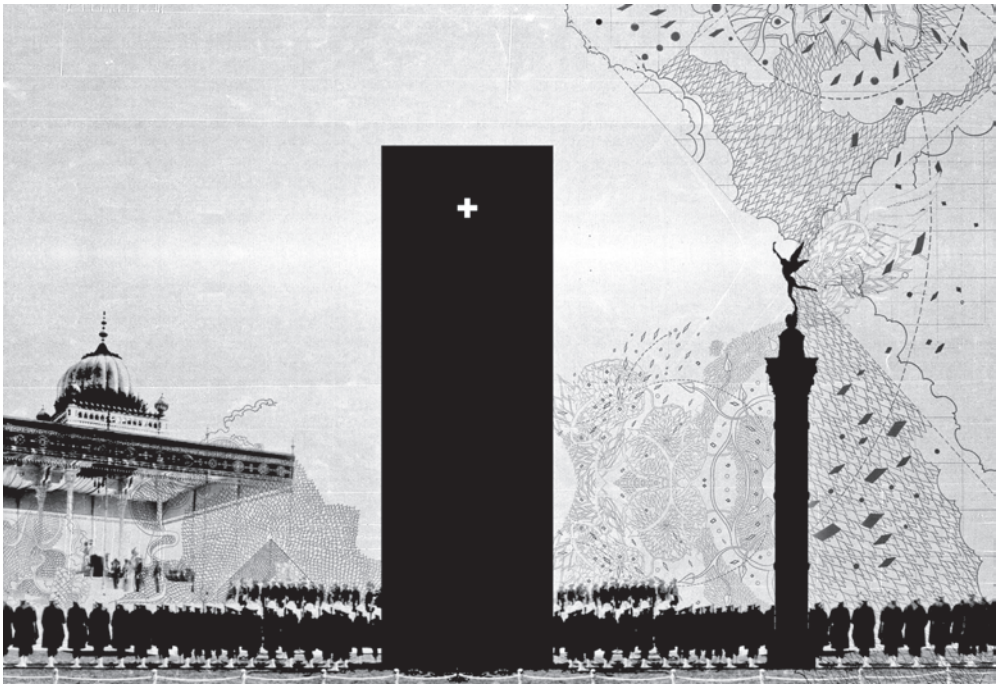


FIGURE E.3. *Seher Shah, detail of* The Concrete Oracles, *2008. Portfolio of eight archival giclee prints, each 33 × 48 cm. (Courtesy of Seher Shah.)*

The Lahore-born Seher Shah (born 1975) grew up largely in Europe and the United States and is now based in New York. Drawing upon her training as an architect, she has produced an evocative body of works on paper that overlay images of monumental Islamic architecture, colonial spectacles, and historic photographs from the archives of the Royal Geographic Society, recasting them in phantasmal constellations. She also layers hand-drawn calligraphy and ornament on the historic monumental archival images to suggest a dreamscape of imbricated pasts of Muslim, British, and Sikh South Asia that persists in the present as a sequence of uncanny afterimages (Figure E.3).

Hamra Abbas (born 1976) has reworked Islamic arabesque patterns and Rajput erotic forms to comment on the aporias of personal and national identity and alienation and violence in relation to "India" and "Islam." Abbas's more recent project, *God Grows on Trees* (2008), includes ninety-nine meticulously painted portraits of individual children who study in religious schools—*madrasas*—in Pakistan, whose number and influence have greatly increased during the recent decades and many of which are alleged to contribute to fundamentalism, terror, and violence.[31] The portraits are accompanied by a

photograph of a tree-lined Lahore street, where the ninety-nine attributes of Allah have been affixed in succession on the trees (Plate 28). Abbas trained as a miniature painter and a sculptor at the NCA and later studied in Berlin. This project shows her striking miniature skills in dialogue with German conceptual figuration to comment on the dilemmas of subjectivity of the *madrasa* children, caught between their repetitive training (which for the artist also has Sufi dimensions) and their demonization as potential faceless terrorists in the global media.[32] This project returns to a central question identified in this study, of emergent and public Muslim South Asian subjectivities in a crisis-ridden modern world, which cannot be reduced to either a liberalist subject or even necessarily a resistant one. But what is even more consequential is that contemporary practice is beginning to look at the significance of discursive and scripturalist Islam itself—which Naiza Khan's later work has also engaged—as a subject for complex artistic interrogation.

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GLOSSARY

Note: Many of the terms in this Glossary possess multiple and overlapping philosophical, Sufi, and poetic connotations in a range of Indic and Islamicate languages. Primary simplified meanings are provided here only for their significance in modern Urdu literary and artistic debates.

ʿaql	reason
ashraf	(literally "honorable") refers to the cultivated Muslim elite of North India
ayat	(literally "sign") refers to any individual verse in the Qur'an, but the word is also found in numerous places in the Qur'an to refer to cycles of nature, decay, and rebirth and to the play of human and divine forces in history
batin	possessing hidden or inner significance (antonym of *zahir*)
divan	collection of poems by a single poet, used in Arabic, Persian, and Urdu
faqir	the person in a state of *faqr*
faqr	state of poverty/freedom
fikr	thought, reflection
ghazal	lyric poetic form consisting of rhyming couplets and a refrain; each line must share the same meter (in Arabic, Persian, and Urdu)
hilya	textual description of the physical and moral character of Prophet Muhammad
iman	belief
jadid	modern
jadidiyat	literary modernism (painterly modernism is usually denoted as *tajridi*)
jamaliyat	aesthetics
khudi	selfhood, a key philosophical term developed by Muhammad Iqbal to refer to an independent and self-possessed self
kitabkhana	a royal bookmaking atelier during the Mughal era
kufi/kufic	oldest Arabic calligraphic script, used in early manuscripts and on architectural monuments
madrasa	religious school
marsiya	elegiac poem commemorating the martyrdom of the Prophet Muhammad's grandson, Husayn, and his comrades at Karbala (in Persian and Urdu)

mimar	builder or architect
muhandis	builder possessing engineering skills
muraqqaʿ	illustrated and illuminated manuscripts and albums composed of diverse examples of calligraphy and painting from the Mughal era
murat	idol, sculptural figure
musavvir	painter
naqqash	one engaged primarily in illumination and ornamentation of legal and ritual documents, borders of manuscripts, and ornaments in architecture
naqsh	design, drawing, trace, impression, ornament
nastaʿliq	a later calligraphic script acclaimed for its elegance and used extensively in Persian and Urdu calligraphy
pir	Sufi master or guide
qalandar	Sufi mystic; a key term in Muhammad Iqbal's philosophy and poetry denoting the abandonment of sedimented social mores in order to strive for higher goals
rubaʿi	poetic form composed of quatrains (in Arabic, Persian, and Urdu)
sahib	term of respect for men (in Urdu)
sharh	commentary on a primary prose or poetic work, usually exhaustively explaining the entire primary work (in Arabic, Persian, and Urdu)
shervani/sherwani	a knee-length formal jacket worn by men, especially by Muslims
shikast	in a broken or defeated state
shikasta	("broken Nasta'liq") refers to a later script extensively used for record keeping and informal correspondence
tajridi	modernist/abstract (painting)
ʿulama	scholars of Islamic religious disciplines
umma/ummah	global Muslim community
zahir	open, visible, manifest, literal (antonym of *batin*)
ziarat	visit to holy shrines and tombs of saints

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. This is in reference to West Pakistan. Aziz Ahmad, "Cultural and Intellectual Trends in Pakistan," 42.
2. For a succinct yet cogent explanation of these terms and their implications for South Asia, see Lawrence, "Islamicate Civilization: The View from Asia."
3. For example, in the writings of Gayatri Spivak, Dipesh Chakrabarty, Naoki Sakai, and others.
4. Santiago Colas's caveat is apt: "I want at this point to comment on my own use of terms such as 'Third World' and 'First World.' I would be far from the first to question the utility or desirability of such broad and homogenizing terms. And indeed, they can be used only with a continual awareness of their inadequacies, most important among these that they overlook the heterogeneity that exists within those massive geographical areas they designate. . . . If we cannot yet do without such unsatisfactory terms, then we need not resign ourselves to an unreflexive use of them." Colas, "The Third World in Jameson's Postmodernism," 259.
5. The term "modernism at large" is very relevant, as it neatly sidesteps the increasingly fruitless debate over whether modernity/modernism are singular formations or multiple/vernacular. Huyssen, "Geographies of Modernism," 194.
6. Apart from the useful survey text by Wijdan Ali, *Modern Islamic Art*, scholars have largely examined modern art from the Muslim world within national frameworks. Representative studies include Karnouk, *Modern Egyptian Art*; Winegar, *Creative Reckonings*; Naef, *A la recherche d'une modernité Arabe*; Faraj, *Strokes of Genius*; and Balaghi and Gumpert, *Picturing Iran*. Many of these are exhibition catalogs, which document important neglected materials and also advance useful methodological arguments. However, due to their limited length and scope, they are no substitute for academic studies offering extended critical consideration of geographically situated modernisms in relation to the intellectual history of the Muslim world. Catalogs on modern and contemporary Islamic art include Daftari, *Without Boundary*; and Venetia Porter, *Word into Art*.
7. The term "transnational modernism" here refers to Paris- and New York–based artistic movements since the later nineteenth century, such as the artists generally subsumed under the term "School of Paris," including Cezanne, Picasso, and Matisse. It extends to pre– and post–World War II movements based in Europe and the United States. It also broadly characterizes metropolitan avant-gardist artistic movements since the 1960s, sometimes seen as postmodernist. It further encompasses the sense of modernism as a project that emerged as a consequence of

movement, alienation, and exile and which makes serious universalist and transnational claims. Generally, the valence of the term in this book is on movements invested in creating durable visual form, rather than on performance and time-based practices.

8. This is not to deny the force of metropolitan institutions in perpetuating a hegemonic Western canon of modern art that denies the role of mutual exchanges of artistic forms from across the globe and that situates artists outside its limits at great structural disadvantage—but simply to stress that all artists cannot be reduced to working solely from a reactive position. For Homi Bhabha's influential formulations of these concepts, see *Location of Culture*. Bhabha is, of course, not responsible for all the ways his work has been interpreted by his numerous readers.
9. This neglect is striking. Until very recently, not a single book on South Asian modern art had been published by a scholarly press in the United States (and the only survey text on modern Islamic art, by Wijdan Ali, omitted consideration of South Asia). These works are primarily histories of Indian art in relation to nationalism. None offer readings of most of the artists examined in this study or situate the work of Muslim artists in the modern intellectual history of South Asian Islam. These include two scholarly works by Guha-Thakurta and Mitter published in the United Kingdom more than a decade earlier, focusing on the period (1850–1920) that precedes the one examined in this book and studying primarily non-Muslim artists. The recent work by Mitter, *Triumph of Modernism*, surveys the 1922–47 era in colonial India. Critical works published in South Asia include the important set of essays by the Indian critic Geeta Kapur on Indian artists, a descriptive history on modernism in Indian art by Yashodhara Dalmia, and other collections of short essays on twentieth-century Indian art. See Guha-Thakurta, *Making of a New "Indian" Art*; Kapur, *When Was Modernism*; Mitter, *Art and Nationalism in Colonial India*; Gayatri Sinha, *Indian Art, an Overview*; and Mitter, *Triumph of Modernism*. Rebecca M. Brown's *Art for a Modern India* is the first work on Indian modern art as national art published by an American academic press (2009). However, due to the rich intellectual history of Islam in South Asia coupled with the minority experience of Muslims, the predicament of Muslim artistic modernity in South Asia was not nationalist in its orientation.
10. The topic increasingly engages the attention of scholars and art historians investigating Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, and other locations. For example, see Craven, *Art and Revolution*; Harney, *In Senghor's Shadow*; Mercer, *Cosmopolitan Modernisms*; Mercer, *Discrepant Abstraction*; Mercer, *Pop Art and Vernacular Cultures*; Ramirez, *Inverted Utopias*; and Sims, *Wifredo Lam*.
11. In a work published over a decade earlier in Pakistan, the critic Akbar Naqvi has undertaken extended readings of many of the artists examined in this study. Although my work draws upon Naqvi's research, his framework is primarily drawn from the insights of an older generation of British scholars and art historians, rather than from recent scholarship influenced by comparative and postcolonial

approaches. And, rather than assuming, as Naqvi does, that artistic symbols and paradigms from Sufism are archetypal and perennial, for example, my approach understands them as being historically shaped in relation to their social and intellectual environment. Finally, unlike Naqvi, this study includes consideration of the manner in which East Pakistani artists were discussed by critics and also includes diaspora practices and the works of younger artists, such as Rasheed Araeen and Naiza Khan, by understanding them as indispensable facets of the trajectory of modernism in Muslim South Asia. Akbar Naqvi, *Image and Identity*. Salima Hashmi's books provide useful narratives, summaries, and sources, which have greatly aided this study; see Hashmi, *Unveiling the Visible*; and Dalmia and Hashmi, *Memory, Metaphor, Mutations*.

12. Although sociocultural subjecthood, of course, cannot always be disentangled from religious practices.
13. Wendy Brown, *Politics Out of History*, 109.
14. The date of this work is difficult to determine. I discuss the problem of dating Chughtai's works in chapter 1.
15. Chughtai also draws upon the aesthetic of the Bengal School (ca. 1900–1930s). This relationship is discussed in chapter 1.
16. On reflexivity in Mughal paintings, see Minissale, *Images of Thought*, chap. 4.
17. For a sustained argument regarding the cultural implications of the minority experiences of Muslims in modern South Asia, see Mufti, *Enlightenment in the Colony*, especially 11–13. Vazira Zamindar has explored the drawn-out bureaucratic process of establishing citizenship in Pakistan, in *The Long Partition*.
18. See Susan Friedman's excellent discussion of these terms in "Definitional Excursions."
19. For example, Charles Harrison's otherwise provocative summary of artistic modernism wrestles with a purely Western trajectory of art, in which Manet's *Olympia* (1865) and Clement Greenberg's influential formalist ideas delineate his interpretive horizon; see Harrison, "Modernism." Similarly, the recent massive textbook, which was developed collaboratively by leading scholars, devotes virtually no attention to non-Western modern art. Foster et al., *Art since 1900*. For an indication of the significance of this work in defining twentieth-century art, see the reviews by eight scholars, published in *Art Bulletin* 88, no. 2 (June 2006): 373–88.
20. "Insofar as the academic discourse of history—that is, 'history' as a discourse produced at the institutional site of the university is concerned, 'Europe' remains the sovereign, theoretical subject of all histories, including the ones we call 'Indian,' 'Chinese,' 'Kenyan,' and so on. There is a peculiar way in which all these other histories tend to become variants on a master narrative that could be called 'the history of Europe.'" Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*, 28.
21. A recent series of essays edited by Kobena Mercer attempts to redress this (see note 10).
22. *Third Text*, a journal edited by Rasheed Araeen since 1987, has consistently chal-

lenged this view. For a representative selection of essays from the journal, see Araeen, Cubitt, and Sardar, *Third Text Reader*.

23. Khair, "Modernism and Modernity," 9.
24. Ibid., 13.
25. Kapur, *When Was Modernism*, 276; quoted in Khair, "Modernism and Modernity," 5. On the reappropriation of modernity, see, for example, one of the special millennium issues of the influential journal *Public Culture*, edited by Dilip Gaonkar in 1999, titled "Alter/Native Modernities" and issued as a book by Duke University Press in 2001. In his editor's essay, "On Alternative Modernities," Gaonkar places culture as the mediator between the social and aesthetic realms: "The . . . two intersecting visions of modernity in the West [are] the Weberian societal/cultural modernity and the Baudelairian cultural/aesthetic modernity. Culture is the capacious and contested middle term. In the Weberian vision, societal modernization fragments cultural meaning and unity. The Baudelairian vision, which is equally alert to the effects of modernization, seeks to redeem modern culture by aestheticizing it."
26. Kapur, *When Was Modernism*, 276.
27. Greenberg, "Modernist Painting," 100–110.
28. "It seems that modernism is being proposed as bourgeois art in the absence of the bourgeois, or more accurately, as aristocratic art in the age when the bourgeois abandons its claim to aristocracy. And how will art keep aristocracy alive? By keeping *itself* alive, as the remaining vessel of the aristocratic account of experience and its modes; by preserving its own means, its media; by proclaiming those means and media as its values, as meanings in themselves" (Clark, "Clement Greenberg's Theory of Art," 27). According to Greenberg, the continuous and durable nature of this exploration in a sense creates a "tradition" of modernism, and art derives its values formally only from within this autonomous tradition. These values cannot be posited a priori and are discovered only in the *practice* of art itself. An important value that painting discovers about itself is that of *flatness*—since the picture plane is nothing other than the application of paint on a flat canvas, modernist painting has developed as an extended investigation into this medium-specific value, rather than narrating the social world outside of the medium. Ibid., 20–36.
29. Clark's critique is wide ranging and provocative and its manifold insights cannot be fully discussed here, but two points are salient. First, Clark argues that Greenberg's stress on flatness as a primary value that modernist painters explored is not simply an optical and technical telos but a complex and contradictory value that emerges as the social world of commodity culture constantly presses against the autonomous painterly tradition. The formalist value of flatness thus constitutes a sort of ground over which technical achievement necessarily brings to the canvas the conflictual historical field that exists outside of it. The autonomy of formalism is constantly under threat by its being volatilized as a metaphor for the social. Sec-

ond, Clark emphasizes that modernist artifacts are not merely identifiable milestones in the march toward the horizon of complete autonomy and the recognition of medium-specificity, but that this process is marked at every stage by doubt and negativity. Modernism is indeed medium-specific, but its attendance on the qualities of the medium "has appeared most characteristically as the site of negation and estrangement." Ibid., 32.

30. Clark argues that the utopian autonomy of art, finding no comparable social group that shares its values, embarks upon a dangerous and relentless avant-gardism. For Clark, this addressee cannot be found in a capitalist society, in which there are no human relations not mediated by capital. But this addressee is also absent in bureaucratized socialism: "Art wants to address someone, it wants something precise, and extended to do; it wants resistance, it needs criteria; it will take risks in order to find them, including the risk of its own dissolution." Ibid., 34. According to Clark, modernism as practice, in its quest for social value under capitalism, thus constantly makes dangerous forays into pure negativity. In Walter Benjamin's second version of the artwork essay, Benjamin also notes that the hallmark of modernity and its technologies is a regime of testing and endless experimenting. The test procedure, rather than an aesthetic artifact meant to last thousands of years, is the unit of truth in modern art. Walter Benjamin, *1935–1938*.
31. Clark, *Farewell to an Idea*.
32. Altieri, "Can Modernism Have a Future?"
33. "Perhaps modernism tried so hard to make sense of the idea that the work had to be considered a reality in its own right because it felt that only so radical a view could escape the binary opposition between 'real' and 'unreal.' Perhaps that binary blinds us to the possible social uses of energies and forces that the artists tried to realize as actual properties of their works as they are imaginatively realized." Ibid., 129.
34. Ibid., 140–41.
35. This is despite the relative realism of later Mughal art. Mughal realism remains linked to transcendent and metaphysical conceptions and is not comparable to nineteenth-century French realism pioneered by Courbet, which has formed the basis of modern social realism. On Mughal art as metaphysical, see Minissale, *Images of Thought*, xxviii and passim.
36. Shakir Ali, "Pakistani musavviri men izhar-i zat," in *Pakistani Adab* (December 1974); reprinted in Shakir Ali, *Shakir ʿAli ki thariren*, 29–40.
37. Shakir Ali, *Shakir ʿAli ki tahriren*, 36. For a discussion of Faiz Ahmad Faiz's 1965 war poem "Black Out," which also refused to reify the nation-state, see Mufti, *Enlightenment in the Colony*, 225–30.
38. Huyssen, "Geographies of Modernism."
39. Ibid., 194. Italics mine.
40. Ibid., 191.

41. Pheng Cheah's "Introduction Part II: The Cosmopolitical Today" (20–41) and Amanda Anderson's essay "Cosmopolitanism, Universalism, and the Divided Legacies of Modernity" provide useful methodological summaries; both are in Cheah and Robbins, *Cosmopolitics*. Other important essays are included in the special issue on cosmopolitanism, *Public Culture* 12, no. 3 (Fall 2000); and in the special issue on the cosmopolis, *Theory, Culture & Society* 19, nos. 1–2 (2002).
42. Pollock, "Cosmopolitan and Vernacular in History."
43. Euben, *Journeys to the Other Shore*, 178.
44. On premodern and early modern Indo-Persian travel narratives, see Alam and Subrahmanyam, *Indo-Persian Travels*.
45. Euben, *Journeys to the Other Shore*, 179–80. Quotations in this passage are from Ira Lapidus, Marshall Hodgson, and Mohammed Bamyeh.
46. Ibid., 180.
47. cooke and Lawrence, *Muslim Networks from Hajj to Hip Hop*. The new series is edited by Carl W. Ernst and Bruce B. Lawrence.
48. Mercer, *Cosmopolitan Modernisms*, 8–13.
49. Representative studies mapping this Persianate world from a variety of disciplines include Tavakoli-Targhi, *Refashioning Iran*; Muzaffar Alam, *The Languages of Political Islam: India*; Losensky, *Welcoming Fighani*; Schimmel, *Islam in the Indian Subcontinent*; and Schimmel, *Islamic Literatures of India*.
50. Juan Cole has provided a concise summary of cultural exchanges between India and Persia from 1500 to 1900, in "Iranian Culture and South Asia."
51. On the technical terms employed in the arts of the book in the Persianate world, see Yves Porter, *Painters, Paintings, and Books*.
52. Lentz and Lowry, *Timur and the Princely Vision*, 20.
53. See chap. 3 on the Timurid *kitabkhana*, in Lentz and Lowry, *Timur and the Princely Vision*; Roxburgh, *Prefacing the Image*, 120; and Schimmel, "The Calligraphy and Poetry of the Kevorkian Album." The *kitabkhana* was considered to be part of the *karkhanas* (workshops) that produced other crafts; on the latter, see Verma, *Karkhanas under the Mughals*.
54. On a general description of painting during the Safavid era, see Stuart Cary Welch, *Masterpieces of Early Safavid Painting*; Canby, *Rebellious Reformer*, 9–42; and Roxburgh, *Prefacing the Image*, 141, 200.
55. Bihzad is associated with a revolution in painting style that Oleg Grabar associates with a certain realism—an observation of the idiosyncrasies of everyday life; see his *Mostly Miniatures*, 111–20. On the problems of attribution of authorship in Persian painting, especially in the case of Bihzad, see Roxburgh, "Kamal al-Din Bihzad and Authorship in Persianate Painting." On the rising status and greater visibility of painters during the Safavid dynasty, see Heger, "Status and Image of the Persianate Artist"; and Minissale, *Images of Thought*.
56. Grabar, *Mostly Miniatures*, 65–81.
57. A standard history is Beach, *Mughal and Rajput Painting*; see also Stuart Cary Welch,

"Introduction," in *Emperors' Album*, 11–30; and Soucek, "Persian Artists in Mughal India."

58. On gift exchanges between Jahangir and the Safavid ruler Shah Abbas, see Littlefield, "The Object of the Gift."
59. See, for example, Bailey, *Jesuits and the Grand Mogul*.
60. Minissale has argued for the continued relevance of Persianate philosophical ideals in Mughal art, in which European influences were assimilated into Mughal paradigms but which led to greater reflexivity in later Mughal art. See Minissale, *Images of Thought*; and Minissale, *Synthesis of European and Mughal Art*.
61. Beach, *Grand Mogul*, 20–29.
62. Stuart Cary Welch, *Emperors' Album*, 190; Beach, *Grand Mogul*, 85–154.
63. Lentz and Lowry, *Timur and the Princely Vision*, 323.
64. On eighteenth-century developments following Mughal art, see the essays in Schmitz, *After the Great Mughals*.
65. Tavakoli-Targhi, *Refashioning Iran*, 33.
66. Archer, *Company Paintings*; Archer, *India and British Portraiture*; Archer and Archer, *Indian Painting for the British*.
67. Constable, *A Selection from the Illustrations*.
68. The literature on this subject is vast. Representative works in English include Robinson, *Islam and Muslim History*; Robinson, *Ulama of Farangi Mahall*; Barbara Metcalf, *Islamic Contestations*; Zaman, *Ulama in Contemporary Islam*; and Keddie, *Sayyid Jamal ad-Din "al-Afghani."* Sugata Bose's recent study, *Hundred Horizons*, looks at the cosmopolitanism of Indian soldiers, traders, and elites, as well as the formation of nationalist solidarities in exile between 1850 and 1950.
69. An important study is Minault, *Khilafat Movement*.
70. On the symbolic economy of gift exchanges between Indian rulers and the British during the late eighteenth century, see Eaton, "Critical Cosmopolitanism."
71. The question of nationalism and its relation to Muslim identity in modern South Asia is historically complex, going at least as far back as the contentions of Syed Ahmad Khan after the Mutiny of 1857, as the awareness of a distinct Muslim identity and its minority status in India became increasingly unavoidable. The national question became especially urgent by the 1920s, refracted by the Khilafat Movement, the poet Muhammad Iqbal's reflections on Muslim affiliation in Indian nationalism, the pro-Indian nationalist position of the later Abul Kalam Azad, and the rise of the Muslim League under the leadership of Jinnah, to cite only a few key developments. Studies include Hasan and Roy, *Living Together Separately*; Jalal, *Self and Sovereignty*; and Aziz Ahmad, *Islamic Modernism*.
72. Mufti, *Enlightenment in the Colony*, chap. 5.
73. Robinson, *Islam and Muslim History*, 6. Ideologies of official history in Pakistan are discussed in Aziz, *Murder of History*.
74. Aamir Mufti makes a compelling argument for the dilemmas of a minority existence in modernity, in *Enlightenment in the Colony*. On Iqbal's views on nationalism,

see also Majeed, "The Aporia of Muslim Nationalism," in *Autobiography, Travel and Postnational Identity*, 174–210. Faisal Devji discusses the concept of the nation in the writings of Syed Ahmad Khan and Iqbal, in "A Shadow Nation."

75. Mufti, *Enlightenment in the Colony*, 11.
76. Zamindar, *Long Partition*.
77. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*. See also Anthony D. Smith's review of Eric Hobsbawm's and Benedict Anderson's formulations, in "Invention and Imagination."
78. Ludden, "Introduction: Ayodhya: A Window on the World," in *Making India Hindu*, 1–23.
79. A recent example is the rhetoric accompanying nuclearization in South Asia; see Aravamudan, "The Hindu Sublime, or Nuclearism Rendered Cultural," in *Guru English*, 142–83; and Dadi, "Nuclearization."
80. For a recent detailed discussion, see Jalal, *Self and Sovereignty*.
81. Gilmartin, "A Networked Civilization," 66.
82. My use of "interpellation" follows Althusser's usage. See Althusser, "Ideology."
83. Mufti, *Enlightenment in the Colony*, 184–85, 206–9, and passim.
84. Zamindar, *Long Partition*, 15.
85. Kapur, "National/Modern: Preliminaries" and "When Was Modernism in Indian Art?" in *When Was Modernism*.
86. Altieri, "Can Modernism Have a Future?" 135.
87. Blair and Bloom, *Cosmophilia*, 11.
88. Blair and Bloom, "Mirage of Islamic Art," 157.
89. In terms of possessing a discursive and aesthetic ground, calligraphy is the exception to this rule. However, many Western connoisseurs, unable to read the Arabic script, did not accord calligraphy the status it might have otherwise secured under "Islamic art."
90. Grabar, "Aesthetics of Islamic Art," 349–50.
91. Blair and Bloom, *Cosmophilia*, 11.
92. Grabar, "Aesthetics of Islamic Art," 350.
93. Ibid., 351.
94. Blair and Bloom, *Cosmophilia*, 11; Blair and Bloom, "Mirage of Islamic Art," 174–75.
95. Blair and Bloom, *Cosmophilia*, 11.
96. Nelson, "Map of Art History." Ashis Nandy has noted that colonial scholarship lauds the archaeological past in order to condemn the present "degenerate" state of the colony. This narrative of a fall from grace, according to Nandy, in *Intimate Enemy*, is how colonial power makes sense of the grand ancient civilizational pasts of their colonies, especially in India and Egypt.
97. Grabar, "Aesthetics of Islamic Art," 336, 354, and passim; Blair and Bloom, *Cosmophilia*, 26. For an example of exegetical readings of Ghalib's Urdu poetry, see Pritchett, "Meaning of the Meaningless Verses."
98. Blair and Bloom, "Mirage of Islamic Art," 161.

99. Hillenbrand, "Studying Islamic Architecture," 5–6.
100. Schimmel, *Calligraphy and Islamic Culture*.
101. Blair's *Islamic Calligraphy* is the first Western historical survey.
102. Nasr, *Islamic Art and Spirituality*.
103. Necipoglu, *Topkapi Scroll*.
104. Blair and Bloom, *Cosmophilia*, 13.
105. Ibid., 17.
106. Grabar, "Aesthetics of Islamic Art," 343; Blair and Bloom, *Cosmophilia*, 9.
107. Blair and Bloom, *Cosmophilia*, 25, 26.
108. Anjum, "Islam as a Discursive Tradition," 670.
109. Fabian, *Time and the Other*, 30–31. For recent approaches to the methodological questions posed by Islamic art, see Flood, "From the Prophet to Postmodernism"; and Carrier, "Deep Innovation and Mere Eccentricity in Islamic Art History."
110. Daftari, *Influence of Persian Art*; Brüderlin, *Ornament and Abstraction*; Mitter, *Triumph of Modernism*.
111. Cernuschi, "Adolf Loos, Alois Riegl, and the Debate on Ornament."
112. Trilling, *Ornament*.
113. Altieri, "Can Modernism Have a Future?" 129.
114. Grabar, *Formation of Islamic Art*, 198–202, 212–13.
115. As is the case in Wijdan Ali's otherwise groundbreaking survey, *Modern Islamic Art*.
116. Grabar, "Aesthetics of Islamic Art," 345.
117. Ibid., 347.
118. For example, Rasheed Araeen's minimalist geometric practice during the 1960s—although made without reference to Islamic art—also recognized this metaphor of nonhierarchy and equality. The Aga Khan Award for Islamic Architecture, which for over twenty years has been awarded to projects that have included slum development projects in Asia and Africa, has also understood this sense of social justice beyond formal or thematic borrowings from the past.
119. "The symmetry of geometry in Islamic art also offers, in my understanding, an allegory for human equality." Araeen, "Geometry in Islam," 12.
120. Euben, *Journeys to the Other Shore*, 179.
121. Wendy Brown, "Impossibility of Women's Studies," 24.

CHAPTER 1

1. The Algerian miniature artist Mohammad Racim (1896–1975) is an exact contemporary of Chughtai. Both artists are of Turkish descent, and they share many thematic and formal concerns, including the striking parallel in their simultaneous reworking of the Persian and Mughal miniature during late colonialism. A comparative study of the artists awaits—not attempted here due to limitations of space and the scope of this study. On Racim, see Roger Benjamin, *Orientalist Aesthetics*, chap. 9.

2. For more information on painting in the Punjab plains, see Srivastava, *Punjab Painting*; Musarrat Hasan, *Painting in the Punjab Plains*; and M. Abdullah Chughtai, *Century of Painting in the Panjab*.
3. M. Abdullah Chughtai, *Century of Painting in the Panjab*, 37.
4. See genealogical table facing p. 240, in M. Abdullah Chughtai, "Abdur Rahman Chughta'i."
5. M. Abdullah Chughtai, *Century of Painting in the Panjab*, 39–42. See Sengupta, "Punjab Pictures," for examples of these "bazaar" prints; see Abdur Rahman Chughtai, *Lahaur ka dabistan-i musavviri*, 37–42.
6. Abdur Rahman Chughtai, *Lahaur ka dabistan-i musavviri*, 31.
7. Akbar Naqvi, *Image and Identity*, 99–133; Jalal Uddin Ahmed, *Art in Pakistan*, 50–53.
8. Akbar Naqvi, *Image and Identity*, 116.
9. Mitter, *Art and Nationalism in Colonial India*; Guha-Thakurta, *Making of a New "Indian" Art*.
10. Akbar Naqvi, *Image and Identity*, 100.
11. Ibid., 116.
12. Ibid., 41–44; Jalal Uddin Ahmed, *Art in Pakistan*, 54; Nesom, "Abdur Rahman Chughtai," 18.
13. Dutta, *Bureaucracy of Beauty*.
14. Choonara, *"Official" Chronicle of Mayo School of Art*; Guha-Thakurta, *Making of a New "Indian" Art*, 153.
15. Mitter, *Art and Nationalism in Colonial India*, chap. 3.
16. Ibid., chap. 5; Guha-Thakurta, *Making of a New "Indian" Art*, 105–16; Jain, *Gods in the Bazaar*; Pinney, *Photos of the Gods*.
17. Guha-Thakurta, *Monuments, Objects, Histories*, pt. 2.
18. Guha-Thakurta, *Making of a New "Indian" Art*, 110. For a study of aesthetic debates in Bengal in the late nineteenth century, see chap. 4 in ibid. See also Mitter, *Art and Nationalism in Colonial India*, chap. 7.
19. Mitter, *Art and Nationalism in Colonial India*, 279–82. On Havell's aesthetic outlook, see ibid., 246–54; and Guha-Thakurta, *Making of a New "Indian" Art*, chap. 5.
20. Guha-Thakurta, *Making of a New "Indian" Art*, 243–45.
21. Mitter, *Art and Nationalism in Colonial India*, 285–89.
22. Ibid., 262–66, 289–94; Guha-Thakurta, *Making of a New "Indian" Art*, 249–59; Bharucha, *Another Asia*.
23. Parimoo, *Studies in Modern Indian Art*, 19. On the influence of Beardsley and other illustrators on Chughtai, see M. Abdullah Chughtai, "Abdur Rahman Chughta'I," 338–39; and Abbas and Hamid, "Chand yaden," 98–99.
24. For a recent reappraisal of the intellectual underpinnings of the Swadeshi movement, see Sartori, "Categorial Logic of a Colonial Nationalism."
25. Lipsey, *Coomaraswamy*, 76–79.

26. Mitter, *Art and Nationalism in Colonial India*, 246–62, 341; Guha-Thakurta, *Making of a New "Indian" Art*, 175–84.
27. Mitter, *Art and Nationalism in Colonial India*, 307–36.
28. Guha-Thakurta, *Making of a New "Indian" Art*, 277.
29. Mitter, *Art and Nationalism in Colonial India*, 121–22, 350–74; Guha-Thakurta, *Making of a New "Indian" Art*, 138, 321–22. For a list of journals, see ibid., 330–31.
30. Mitter, *Art and Nationalism in Colonial India*, 350.
31. Guha-Thakurta, *Making of a New "Indian" Art*, 311–12; Rao, *Modern Indian Painting*, 15.
32. Abanindranath's stance shifted over the years, from one of creating consciously nationalist art to one in which the artist occupied a private and autonomous realm in later decades. Guha-Thakurta, *Making of a New "Indian" Art*, 267; Ratnabali Chatterjee, *From the Karkhana to the Studio*, 104.
33. Mitter notes a telling incident in this regard. Havell invited Abanindranath to examine a Mughal miniature from the seventeenth century by using a magnifying lens: "Once I used this lens, my 'third eye,' to scrutinise the painting of a crane. My word! As if a live crane was in front of me. What incredible detail. . . . I was lost for words. I then noticed Havell standing silently behind me with a pleased expression, as if he had anticipated my reaction. I felt dizzy. So! Our old art too contains an embarrassment of riches. Why then did I agonise so long about finding proper indigenous material to emulate?" Abanindranath also used to "joke with his students that only he, a Pirali Brahmin, could properly imagine Mughal culture. The Pirali (Pir-Ali) Tagores were stigmatized by the orthodox for taking employment under the Mughals." Mitter, *Art and Nationalism in Colonial India*, 226.
34. On the work of Abanindranath, see Appasamy, *Abanindranath Tagore*; and Parimoo, *Paintings of the Three Tagores*. On the numerous illustrations of the *Rubaiyat*, see Martin and Mason, *Art of Omar Khayyam*.
35. Guha-Thakurta, *Making of a New "Indian" Art*, 293.
36. Mitter, *Art and Nationalism in Colonial India*, 221.
37. Guha-Thakurta, *Making of a New "Indian" Art*, 285.
38. Ibid., 295.
39. Mitter, *Art and Nationalism in Colonial India*, 261, 341; Coomaraswamy, *Essays in National Idealism*; Coomaraswamy, *Art and Swadeshi*.
40. Guha-Thakurta, *Making of a New "Indian" Art*, 209, 299.
41. Coomaraswamy in particular was an indefatigable researcher in this regard. For examples of Abanindranath's essays, see "Shadanga: Six Limbs of Painting" and "Some Notes on Indian Artistic Anatomy."
42. Mitter, *Art and Nationalism in Colonial India*, 303–6; Guha-Thakurta, *Making of a New "Indian" Art*, 208–11.
43. M. Abdullah Chughtai, "Abdur Rahman Chughta'i," 309–10.
44. Mitter, *Art and Nationalism in Colonial India*, 260, 285. Coomaraswamy's "diagnosis

of national *angst* as a Hindu one was symptomatic of the growing exclusion of Muslims from the *swadeshi* movement" (260). For the late nineteenth-century view in Bengal of allegations of Muslim disruption of an otherwise healthy India, see Guha-Thakurta, *Monuments, Objects, Histories*, pt. 2.

45. Quoted in Osman Jamal, "E. B. Havell," 11. Jamal's essay critically discusses Havell's views in the context of British imperialism and Indian nationalism. Banerji defends Havell, in "Orientalism of E B Havell." Osman Jamal's response is "Debashish Banerji's Havell." On Havell's Aryan obsessions, see Guha-Thakurta, *Making of a New "Indian" Art*, 180–81.
46. Coomaraswamy, *Arts and Crafts of India and Ceylon*, 221–23.
47. Guha-Thakurta, *Making of a New "Indian" Art*, 209.
48. Gupta became vice principal in 1914. From 1921 he was assistant curator of the Lahore Museum, and he was curator/principal from 1929 until 1942. Gupta was in charge of the acquisition of major collections of Sikh and Pahari miniature paintings at the museum. Aijazuddin, *Pahari Paintings*, xxi–xxii.
49. "A study of ancient, classical inheritance, from an 'Indian' and 'artistic' point of view, was meant directly to inspire the growth of 'national art' in the country, and the cultivation of a 'higher' aesthetic sense was seen as indispensable to the larger project of 'nation-building.'" Guha-Thakurta, *Making of a New "Indian" Art*, 210.
50. Coomaraswamy, *Rajput Painting*, 1.
51. Ibid., 5–6.
52. Ibid., 74.
53. Ibid., 83.
54. For an account of the publication and reception of the book, see Lipsey, *Coomaraswamy*, 94–104. The artist Gulam Mohammed Sheikh offers another critique, in "Coomaraswamy and Rajput Painting." For a history of the scholarly study of Mughal and Rajput paintings, see Chandra, *On the Study of Indian Art*, 81–112; and Beach, "Bibliographical Essay," in *Mughal and Rajput Painting*, 240–47. On the establishment of the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum, see Stronge, "Collecting Mughal Art."
55. Beach, *Mughal and Rajput Painting*, 228.
56. Ibid., 226.
57. These include works by Percy Brown, Hermann Goetz, and Ivan Stchoukine. Short biographies of these scholars are available in the *Grove Dictionary of Art* (online). For a summary account of twentieth-century scholarship on Mughal and Rajput painting, see Chandra, *On the Study of Indian Art*, 81–93.
58. Coomaraswamy, *Mughal Painting*.
59. "Henri Focillon," *Grove Dictionary of Art* (online).
60. M. Abdullah Chughtai, *Le Tadj Mahal d'Agra (Inde)*.
61. Abdullah Chughtai's biography of Abdur Rahman is a useful guide to the latter's career. The family tree reaches back nine generations, before the seventeenth century, and includes many ancestors marked by the titles of *muhandis* (builder),

mimar (architect), and *naqqash* (decorator). M. Abdullah Chughtai, "Abdur Rahman Chughta'i." A key source on Chughtai's life and works is art historian Marcella Nesom's unpublished dissertation on Chughtai, "Abdur Rahman Chughtai: A Modern South Asian Artist." For a detailed account of the artist's early years and his relationship with Bengal School followers, see Arif Rahman Chughtai, *Challenge of M. A. Rahman Chughtai to the Bengal School of Art*.

62. M. Abdullah Chughtai, "Abdur Rahman Chughta'i," 244; Nesom, "Abdur Rahman Chughtai," 37; Abdur Rahman Chughtai, *Lahaur ka dabistan-i musavviri*, 35.
63. M. Abdullah Chughtai, "Abdur Rahman Chughta'i," 245–48; Arif Rahman Chughtai, *Challenge of M. A. Rahman Chughtai to the Bengal School of Art*, 16–19.
64. Ramananda Chatterjee, *Chatterjee's Picture Albums*. I have consulted volumes 1–7 and 10–17.
65. According to Arif Rahman Chughtai's detailed explanation, the artist made this trip in 1919; see Arif Rahman Chughtai, *Challenge of M. A. Rahman Chughtai to the Bengal School of Art*, 19–24. Abdullah Chughtai notes that the artist visited Calcutta in 1916; M. Abdullah Chughtai, "Abdur Rahman Chughta'i," 246.
66. M. Abdullah Chughtai, "Abdur Rahman Chughta'i," 246.
67. Musarrat Hasan, *Painting in the Punjab Plains*, 205.
68. M. Abdullah Chughtai, "Abdur Rahman Chughta'i," 264–65; Arif Rahman Chughtai, *Challenge of M. A. Rahman Chughtai to the Bengal School of Art*, 32–34.
69. Nesom, "Abdur Rahman Chughtai," 41–42; M. Abdullah Chughtai, "Abdur Rahman Chughta'i," 263–65; Musarrat Hasan, *Painting in the Punjab Plains*, 71–76.
70. Arif Rahman Chughtai, *Challenge of M. A. Rahman Chughtai to the Bengal School of Art*, 34–47.
71. Nesom, "Abdur Rahman Chughtai," 43–45; M. Abdullah Chughtai, "Abdur Rahman Chughta'i," 270–72.
72. Arif Rahman Chughtai, *Challenge of M. A. Rahman Chughtai to the Bengal School of Art*, 28–34. Nesom considers some early paintings by Chughtai as being "remarkably similar" to works by Gupta and other Bengal School artists in terms of their theme, composition, and use of color; Nesom, "Abdur Rahman Chughtai," 105–6.
73. M. Abdullah Chughtai, "Abdur Rahman Chughta'i," 272; Nesom, "Abdur Rahman Chughtai," 47.
74. Nesom, "Abdur Rahman Chughtai," 54–55.
75. Akbar Naqvi, *Image and Identity*, 47.
76. Nesom, "Abdur Rahman Chughtai," 235–42.
77. Abanindranath Tagore, "Priyadarshika, or the Amiable Critic," 64; Nesom, "Abdur Rahman Chughtai," 236.
78. For a further account of this rivalry and the antagonism of the Bengal School followers, see Arif Rahman Chughtai, *Challenge of M. A. Rahman Chughtai to the Bengal School of Art*, 20–44 and passim.
79. M. Abdullah Chughtai, "Abdur Rahman Chughta'i," 275–78.
80. Abdur Rahman Chughtai, *Chughtai's Indian Paintings*. Significantly, the title and

the themes of this volume equate Indian with Hindu and thus reproduce sectarian ideas of Indian nationalism that had inflected much of Indian art and criticism since the later nineteenth century. The only documented example of a "national" theme is his work around 1919, which marked the beginning of a period of political agitation in the Punjab, with Amritsar inflamed by the Jalianwala Bagh massacre and the annual meeting of the Indian National Congress. Chughtai's painting of a distressed woman facing a spinning wheel probably refers to Gandhi's spinning wheel as a symbol of self-reliance. M. Abdullah Chughtai, "Abdur Rahman Chughta'i," 280; Nesom, "Abdur Rahman Chughtai," 173.

81. Akbar Naqvi characterizes the later Chughtai as abandoning "Ajanta realism" and clothing his female figures in "voluminous dresses of Indo-Iranian traditional fashion." Akbar Naqvi, *Image and Identity*, 65; see also Nesom, "Abdur Rahman Chughtai," 70–72, 139–40.
82. Abdur Rahman Chughtai, *Maqalat-i Chughta'i*, 2:145. Chughtai's essays, edited by Shima Majid, have been published in two volumes.
83. Abdur Rahman Chughtai, *Muraqqaʿ-i Chughta'i*; Akbar Naqvi, *Image and Identity*, 73–95.
84. Abdur Rahman Chughtai, *Maqalat-i Chughta'i*, 2:49.
85. See chap. 3, on the Timurid *kitabkhana*, in Lentz and Lowry, *Timur and the Princely Vision*; Roxburgh, *Prefacing the Image*, 120; and Schimmel, "The Calligraphy and Poetry of the Kevorkian Album." The *kitabkhana* was considered part of the *karkhanas* (workshops) that produced other crafts; on the latter, see Verma, *Karkhanas under the Mughals*.
86. A few reproductions of *muraqqaʿ* albums have been published. See Stuart Cary Welch, *Emperors' Album*; and al-Hasani, *St. Petersburg Muraqqa*.
87. The word *muraqqaʿ* denotes "patchwork" and can refer to the much-used, patched cloak of a dervish, which indicated his repudiation of wealth. Roxburgh, *Prefacing the Image*, 120; Thackston, *Album Prefaces*, vii. Thackston has translated many album prefaces from Timurid and Mughal albums. See also Roxburgh's recent study of seven Persian albums, *The Persian Album, 1400–1600*.
88. David Roxburgh's detailed study of Timurid albums, *Prefacing the Image*, has attempted to extract internal criteria for writing an art history of Timurid painting and calligraphy. On the relationship between artists and calligraphers in the context of state patronage during the Safavid period, see Heger, "Status and Image of the Persianate Artist." On Mughal albums, see Stuart Cary Welch, *Emperors' Album*, especially the essay by Annemarie Schimmel, "The Calligraphy and Poetry of the Kevorkian Album."
89. Sayyid-Ahmad, "Preface to the Amir Ghayb Beg Album," 27.
90. Stuart Cary Welch, *Emperors' Album*, 23–29; Beach, *Grand Mogul*, 26–27.
91. Abbas and Hamid, "Chand yaden," 86.
92. Nesom, "Abdur Rahman Chughtai," 47–48; Abbas and Hamid, "Chand yaden," 87.

93. M. Abdullah Chughtai, "Abdur Rahman Chughta'i," 275.
94. Ghalib, *Divan-i Ghalib (Urdu)*. According to Naqvi, this portrait was approved by a number of prominent Indian Muslim students. Akbar Naqvi, *Image and Identity*, 86.
95. Abdur Rahman Chughtai, *Maqalat-i Chughta'i*, 2:146.
96. In Abdullah Chughtai's version of the portrait's destruction, the artist himself tore up Ghalib's portrait at that very meeting. M. Abdullah Chughtai, "Abdur Rahman Chughta'i," 275.
97. When Abdullah Chughtai, Tasir, the artist, and other writers enthusiastic about this project approached Iqbal to hear his thoughts, Iqbal initially suggested that Ghalib's Persian poetry should be illustrated first. However, due to its greater popularity and accessibility, the group decided to continue to focus on the Urdu *divan*.
98. Nesom, "Abdur Rahman Chughtai," 48; Venkatachalam, *Contemporary Indian Painters*, 52–53.
99. Martin and Mason, *Art of Omar Khayyam*; Wollen, "Out of the Past: Fashion/Orientalism/The Body," in *Raiding the Icebox*, 1–34.
100. Edmund Dulac, an illustrator of *Arabian Nights* and *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*, is also mentioned as an influence on Chughtai. See Abbas and Hamid, "Chand yaden," 98–99.
101. Arif Rahman Chughtai, *Struggle of M. A. Rahman Chughtai*, 8–16; Nesom, "Abdur Rahman Chughtai," 173–74; Abdur Rahman Chughtai, *Maqalat-i Chughta'i*, 1:143; M. Abdullah Chughtai, "Abdur Rahman Chughta'i," 333–36.
102. M. Abdullah Chughtai, "Abdur Rahman Chughta'i," 286. This letter is quoted by Abdullah Chughtai with different wording in his *Iqbal ki suhbat men*, 357. Of significance is the variation in the last sentence, which reads, "And if you have a book *by art critics*, kindly also bring it."
103. In April 1927, for example, he reminded Abdullah to lend him a newly published book, probably referring to Thorburn, *Art and the Unconscious*.
104. Abdur Rahman Chughtai, *Maqalat-i Chughta'i*, 1:26. For an earlier draft of Iqbal's foreword, see Arif Rahman Chughtai, *Story-Teller*, 9.
105. M. Abdullah Chughtai, *Iqbal ki suhbat men*, 361.
106. Iqbal, "Foreword," n.p.
107. Ibid.
108. As Oleg Grabar has pointed out, Bihzad's work evokes a sense of realism based on direct observation, which is precisely the opposite of Chughtai's claim. Grabar, *Mostly Miniatures*, 111–20. Abdullah Chughtai also wrote a monograph on Bihzad; see his *Kamal al-Din Bihzad musavvir*. Recent works on Bihzad include Barry, *Figurative Art in Medieval Islam*.
109. For example, in the poems "Funun-i latifa" (in Tasir, *Maqalat-i Tasir*, 135–77), "Musavvir," and "Hunarvan-i hind."
110. Iqbal, *Zarb-i kalim*, 124/586. Also see S. Hasan, *Battle of Ideas*, 257–60.

111. Ram, "Abdur Rahman Chughta'i," 81. Although the images in the revised editions are new, Nesom reports that many illustrations of the revised editions are faithful copies of the first edition. In a preface to the second edition, Chughtai stated that the reason he could not simply reissue the first edition was because the printing blocks that had been used to print the first edition were destroyed in Europe during World War II, and the original paintings were also no longer in his possession. Abdur Rahman Chughtai, "Naqsh-i sani," in *Naqsh-i Chughta'i*.
112. Nesom, "Abdur Rahman Chughtai," 51–52. His cover designs include volumes by Faiz Ahmad Faiz, Firaq Gorakhpuri, N. M. Rashid, Fehmida Riaz, Qateel Shifai, and Imtiaz Ali Taj. I am grateful to Arif Rahman Chughtai for sharing this material with me. A few cover designs are reproduced in Arif Rahman Chughtai, *Story-Teller*, 24. Book illustrations include S. A. Rahman, *Safar*.
113. For an example, see the cover of the 1968 "afsana number," a special issue of the journal *Naqush*. I am grateful to Arif Rahman Chughtai for sharing this with me. See also Anvar Sadid, "Chughta'i kay khutut," 156–57, 183. Iqbal wrote an appreciative letter dated August 17, 1924, praising the launch of *Nairang-i khayal* but also noting that "it was a pleasure to see Abdur Rahman Chughtai's painting *Tohfa-i Laila* [The Gift of/for Laila]; it's excellent: let's see when *Tohfa-i Qais* [The Gift of/for Qais] will appear," characteristically stressing the need for masculinity in the arts. The letter is reproduced in Arif Rahman Chughtai, *Struggle of M. A. Rahman Chughtai*, 11.
114. Sadid, "Chughta'i kay khutut," 166–67, 179–83.
115. Salim Akhtar, "*Muraqqaʿ-i Chughta'i*," 185–203. Compare, for example, with the complete commentary on Ghalib's *divan*, by Mihr, *Nava-yi surosh*.
116. Ram, "Abdur Rahman Chughta'i," 77.
117. See, for example, Tasir's editorial, "Taʿaruf," from *Nairang-i khayal*, July 1930, in which he claims that the journal is distinctive in placing emphasis on essays on drama and visual art, as well as on reproducing images in the journal. Reprinted in Tasir, *Maqalat-i Tasir*, 516–17.
118. Ram, "Abdur Rahman Chughta'i," 78.
119. M. Abdullah Chughtai, "Abdur Rahman Chughta'i," 300–303.
120. Nesom, "Abdur Rahman Chughtai," 53–54.
121. Akbar Naqvi, *Image and Identity*, 81. Selections of Tasir's essays from *Nairang-i Khayal* are reprinted in *Maqalat-i Tasir*. See, for example, the section on "Funun-i latifa," 135–77.
122. Tasir, *Maqalat-i Tasir*, 532.
123. The English word is used in Urdu transliteration.
124. Tasir, *Maqalat-i Tasir*, 151.
125. Tasir possibly refers to William Powell Frith (1819–1909), a sentimental Victorian painter.
126. Tasir, *Maqalat-i Tasir*, 531.
127. Ibid., 536.

128. Ibid., 537–38.
129. Majid Malik, *Kharman-i jan*, 153–67.
130. A selection of essays is in Majid, *Musavviri par muntakhab mazamin*; see also *Mah-i nau: chalis salah makhzan*.
131. Abbas and Hamid, "Chand yaden," 102–3.
132. Faiz, "Musavvir-i mashriq"; Quraishi, "Iqbal aur Chughta'i," 112–13. See also comments by Chughtai himself, in *Maqalat-i Chughta'i*, 1:144.
133. Rice, "Abdur Rahman Chughta'i ko khiraj-i ʿaqidat," 21. The published text is likely translated from English.
134. Quraishi, "Iqbal aur Chughta'i," 112.
135. Rice, "Abdur Rahman Chughta'i ko khiraj-i ʿaqidat," 21.
136. Zaki, "Chughta'i kay fan kay baz pehlu," 35–40. The published text is likely translated from English.
137. Agha, "Ghalib aur Chughta'i," 214–15; Abbas and Hamid, "Chand yaden," 101.
138. Salim Akhtar, "*Muraqqaʿ-i Chughta'i*," 190.
139. Abdur Rahman Chughtai, *Maqalat-i Chughta'i*, 1:16.
140. I am assuming the gender of the *ghazal*'s beloved as female, as expressed by Chughtai's paintings. However, in the Urdu *ghazal*, the gender is typically masculine and essentially radically indeterminate. Petievich, "Gender Politics and the Urdu Ghazal." On the imagery of the Persian *ghazal*, see Schimmel, *A Two-Colored Brocade*.
141. Salim Akhtar, "*Muraqqaʿ-i Chughta'i*," 190.
142. Faiz, "Musavvir-i mashriq," 73. For an extended discussion of Hali's critique of the *ghazal*, see Pritchett, *Nets of Awareness*, chap. 12.
143. Faiz, "Musavvir-i mashriq," 71–72; see also Tasir, *Maqalat-i Tasir*, 174.
144. M. Abdullah Chughtai, "Abdur Rahman Chughta'i," 246, 261.
145. The question of light in painting and architecture is tied to the larger question of Muslim aesthetics. Chughtai asserts elsewhere that Muslims, being confident and elevated, disliked living in caves or in cramped and dark places. Their architecture and applied arts are thus an expression of the Muslim worldview. Abdur Rahman Chughtai, *Maqalat-i Chughta'i*, 2:85. This view of Indian architecture was also expounded by colonial officials; see Thomas R. Metcalf, *An Imperial Vision*.
146. Abdur Rahman Chughtai, *Maqalat-i Chughta'i*, 1:142, 1:147; Nesom, "Abdur Rahman Chughtai," 44.
147. Majeed, *Autobiography, Travel and Postnational Identity*, 192–93.
148. Sibte Hasan, "Iqbal's Concept of Man," in *The Battle of Ideas in Pakistan*, 231–80.
149. Majeed, *Autobiography, Travel and Postnational Identity*, 193, 198–202.
150. Noted by Quraishi, "Iqbal aur Chughta'i."
151. Abdur Rahman Chughtai, *Maqalat-i Chughta'i*, 2:225–26.
152. Ibid., 2:224–31.
153. Ibid., 2:225. Italics mine.
154. Ibid., 2:224.

155. M. Abdullah Chughtai, "Abdur Rahman Chughta'i," 259; Haidarabadi, "Chughta'i: aik azim fankar," 205; Abdullah, "Chughta'i ki infiradiyat," 62. Saeed Abdullah reiterates the binary that equates Eastern painting with color and emotion and Western painting with form and reason.
156. M. Abdullah Chughtai, "Abdur Rahman Chughta'i," 344–46; Faiz, "Musavvir-i mashriq," 73.
157. Chughtai remarked that many Urdu poets wrote poems based on his paintings. *Maqalat-i Chughta'i*, 1:24.
158. Abdur Rahman Chughtai, *Maqalat-i Chughta'i*, 1:90–103, especially 96, 101.
159. Abdur Rahman Chughtai, *Maqalat-i Chughta'i*, 2:223. See also Quraishi's remarks on the female body, in "Iqbal aur Chughta'i," 113.
160. Quraishi, "Iqbal aur Chughta'i," 111.
161. M. Abdullah Chughtai, "Abdur Rahman Chughta'i," 336; Akbar Naqvi, *Image and Identity*, 90–97.
162. Quraishi, "Iqbal aur Chughta'i," 113.
163. Rukh, "Image*N*ation—A Visual Text," 93.
164. One of the few possible exceptions is his painting of a distressed woman facing a spinning wheel, Gandhi's symbol of self-reliance. M. Abdullah Chughtai, "Abdur Rahman Chughta'i," 280; Nesom, "Abdur Rahman Chughtai," 173.
165. Arif Rahman Chughtai, *Story-Teller*, 23; Arif Rahman Chughtai, *Struggle of M. A. Rahman Chughtai*, 22–36. He made designs for the national flag, Pakistan International Airlines, and Pakistan Television.
166. Abdur Rahman Chughtai, *Maqalat-i Chughta'i*, 2:98.
167. Tasir, *Maqalat-i Tasir*, 173–77. As Saadia Toor has recently shown, Tasir at this point was deeply involved in polemical debates with Marxist and progressive writers as to the role of the artist in the newly formed Pakistan. According to Toor, by this period, Tasir and a few other formerly progressive writers had largely reversed their positions and had become "organic intellectuals of the Pakistani ruling class." Toor, "Culture/Nation/State," 131, 148, and passim. The combative tone of Tasir's interview is evidence of these ongoing debates, in which he participated as a central figure.
168. Abdur Rahman Chughtai, *Maqalat-i Chughta'i*, 1:16.
169. Chughtai added, "If Ustad Bihzad . . . [and other classical Indo-Persian masters] were to see my art, they will not be able to complain that their art had not changed at all since their era." *Maqalat-i Chughta'i*, 1:141.
170. Sadid remarked that "Chughtai used to complain that the cost of *'Amal-i Chughta'i* was exorbitant and that he wished to find a way to release a less expensive popular [*avami*] edition." Sadid, "Chughta'i kay khutut," 173.
171. Musarrat Hasan, *Painting in the Punjab Plains*.
172. Abdur Rahman Chughtai, *Maqalat-i Chughta'i*, 1:16, 1:19.
173. Sadid, "Chughta'i kay khutut," 166. The artist claimed, "My art is recognized by the appellation 'Chughtai Art' and will always be recognized as such," adding, "My pic-

tures have influenced women to become more refined in their dress, makeup, and grooming. When a woman attends a gathering dressed and adorned in a manner reminiscent of my paintings, observers associate her with 'Chughtai Art.'" Abdur Rahman Chughtai, *Maqalat-i Chughta'i*, 1:147.

174. Nesom, "Abdur Rahman Chughtai," 101–64.
175. For an extended discussion of this work, see ibid., 172–75. Iqbal reportedly appreciated an early version of this work. Arif Rahman Chughtai, *Struggle of M. A. Rahman Chughtai*, 12–13.
176. Nesom, "Abdur Rahman Chughtai," 102–4.
177. On the life and work of N. M. Rashid, see Pue, "Desert of Continuity."

CHAPTER 2

1. Akbar Naqvi, *Image and Identity*, 180.
2. According to Naqvi, an Indian reporter visiting Karachi "found the Pakistani art scene a barren waste." *Image and Identity*, 343.
3. Aziz Ahmad, "Cultural and Intellectual Trends in Pakistan," 35–44, 42.
4. Even though all these ventures ceased publication after only a few issues, the persistent efforts to provide a discursive ground to the emergence of modernism in painting is indicated by these efforts.
5. *50 Years of Lahore Arts Council, Alhamra*.
6. Toor, "Constructing the Pakistani Nation-State."
7. For a good overview of political and cultural developments in the era of decolonization, in which Nehru played a key role, see Prashad, *Darker Nations*.
8. Manto, "Allah ka bara fazl hai." Paraphrased in Oesterheld, "Urdu Literature in Pakistan," 81–82.
9. Hasan Zaheer, *Times and Trial of the Rawalpindi Conspiracy*.
10. Intizar Husain, *Chiraghon ka dhuan*, 65–79.
11. Jalal, *State of Martial Rule*, 123; Toor, "Culture/Nation/State."
12. For example, the American abstract expressionist artist Elaine Hamilton lived in Pakistan during the late 1950s and early 1960s. She furthered abstract expressionism by holding exhibitions supported by the pro–U.S. Pakistani government and by her writings. See the catalog, Hamilton, *Elaine Hamilton*; and her review, Hamilton, "Third National Exhibition."
13. Guilbaut, *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art*; see essays by Eva Cockcroft, Serge Guilbaut, Max Kozloff, and others in pt. 2 of Frascina, *Pollock and After*; see Saunders, *Cultural Cold War*.
14. This is a term that T. J. Clark employed to characterize the later Greenberg; see Clark, "Clement Greenberg's Theory of Art."
15. Sher-Gil was an important example for Zubeida Agha, the first Pakistani modernist painter, and for Shakir Ali, the most influential modernist.
16. Rais and Kazmi, *Taraqqi pasand adab*; Sajjad Zaheer, *Light*; Coppola, *Marxist Influences*; Gopal, *Literary Radicalism in India*.

17. Sambrani, "Progressive Artists' Group," 103; on progressive artists in Bengal, see Nercam, *Peindre au Bengale*, 115–40.
18. Sambrani, "Progressive Artists' Group," 104.
19. Ibid., 106.
20. Ibid., 111.
21. In this regard, Charles Altieri's argument, as explained in the Introduction, that metaphoricity and play of modernism provide for a more compelling positing of alternative utopias is salient.
22. Javed Majeed noted that even modern Urdu poetry, which strives to reject the legacy of the classical lyric *ghazal* form, hovers on "the brink of a self-referential symbolic world which is always on the point of giving way to a historical and empirical world without actually succumbing to it." Majeed, *Autobiography, Travel and Postnational Identity*, 133n116.
23. Art criticism in Pakistan has largely ignored the 1940s leftist and communist background of these artists.
24. Marjorie Husain, *Ali Imam*.
25. Biographical information is gleaned from Muhammad Sirajul Islam, *Zainul Abedin*; Syed Manzoorul Islam, "From Bengal School to Bangladesh Art"; Haque, "Saga of Man and Nature"; and Mustafa Zaman, "Artist of People's Struggle." An important interpretive work is Jahangir, *Quest of Zainul Abedin*. Early essays on the artist include Jalal Uddin Ahmed, *Zainul Abedin*; Zahedi, "Dacca Art Institute"; S. Amjad Ali, "Dacca Artists"; and Gupta, "Zainul Abedin: A Humanist in Art."
26. Jalal Uddin Ahmed, *Zainul Abedin*, n.p.
27. "His inspiration was from the past, that is why his focus was on folk-art. But his responsibility was to the future and therefore his interest was in institution building." Jahangir, *Quest of Zainul Abedin*, 30. See also Azra Zaman, "Contemporary Art in Pakistan."
28. Rahi, "Zainul Abedin, My Teacher."
29. Nazrul Islam, "Introduction," n.p.
30. Syed Manzoorul Islam, "From Bengal School to Bangladeshi Art," 20.
31. Abedin's statement on the need for art galleries and museums is in Abedin, "A Case for Museums and Art Galleries."
32. On artists who depicted the Famine, see Nercam, *Peindre au Bengale*, 129–35.
33. Mallik, "Impulses of the 1940s," 91; Ela Sen, *Darkening Days*. In his important monograph on the artist, Burhanuddin Khan Jahangir has argued that Abedin was a painter of crisis and that his potential was fulfilled by drawings rather than in painting. Jahangir, *Quest of Zainul Abedin*, 14–15. I argue that the oversized figure and its truncated placement in relation to the frame remains an important formal value in many of Abedin's works.
34. Mallik, "Impulses of the 1940s," 91; Nazrul Islam, "Introduction," n.p.
35. Mitter, *Triumph of Modernism*, chap. 2. See also his more recent essay, "Decentering Modernism."

36. Mitter, *Triumph of Modernism*, 35.
37. Ibid., 33.
38. Ibid., 94.
39. On the life and work of Nandalal Bose, see Quintanilla, *Rhythms of India*. On Ramkinker Baij, see Mitter, *Triumph of Modernism*, 90–99; and Kumar, *Santiniketan*. On the relevance of the Santhal motifs for Indian modern art, see the catalog associated with the exhibition, Bradley et al., *Santhal Family: Positions around an Indian Sculpture* (also at the Museum of Contemporary Art Antwerp's website, ⟨http://www.muhka.be⟩).
40. Jalal Uddin Ahmed, *Zainul Abedin*, n.p.
41. Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity*; Rouse, "Gender and Identity in Pakistan"; Kamal, "Chughta'i aur Zainul Abedin."
42. Streets, *Martial Races*.
43. Nazrul Islam, "Introduction," n.p.
44. In a lecture delivered in 1974, Abedin stated: "I usually have a subject in my painting. . . . Technique only receives a secondary importance with me. . . . I do not quite believe in the artist's completely becoming a research scientist exploring the possibilities of technique, or a style, or a medium just for the sake of it." Abedin, "Zainul Abedin's Address on the Occasion of Award," 121–22.
45. Nazrul Islam, "Introduction," n.p.
46. For an insightful summary of the cultural politics of language in East Pakistan during the 1950s, see Uddin, *Constructing Bangladesh*, 124–33.
47. Jalal, *State of Martial Rule*, 290–91. But one should not imagine that Mughal culture has been fully co-opted by the (West) Pakistani nation-state. On the popular level in Bangladesh today, the Taj Mahal is a popular common motif on its rickshaws. Glassie, *Art and Life in Bangladesh*, 29–37, 146, 430–33.
48. Syed Manzoorul Islam, "From Bengal School to Bangladeshi Art," 19.
49. Akbar Naqvi, *Image and Identity*, 348.
50. Ibid., 351.
51. Aziz Ahmad, "Cultural and Intellectual Trends in Pakistan," 36. I have changed the spellings of the artists' names to conform to my usage.
52. Glassie, *Art and Life in Bangladesh*, 268.
53. Rahi, "Zainul Abedin, My Teacher."
54. Jahangir, *Quest of Zainul Abedin*, 24.
55. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 24.
56. Fabian, *Time and the Other*, 30–31. Italics in original.
57. Jahangir, *Quest of Zainul Abedin*, 25. Syed Manzoorul Islam notes: "The more oppressive the state machinery became, the stronger the threat to Bengali identity was, the more involved the artists became in projecting an endangered landscape." "From Bengal School to Bangladeshi Art," 19.
58. Aziz Ahmad, "Cultural and Intellectual Trends in Pakistan," 42.
59. The recent comment by a leading Pakistani art historian, that East Pakistani art-

ists possessed "a fanatical attachment to their language," continues to demonstrate how the colonialist attitudes prevalent in earlier (West) Pakistan even at the level of culture—which have never been resolved—persist until today. Akbar Naqvi, *Image and Identity*, 347.

60. Mahmood Mamdani interview with Nermeen Shaikh, "Mahmood Mamdani," 98.
61. Abedin, "A Case for Museums and Art Galleries." The important body of archives and documentation in Karachi, the Foundation for Museum of Modern Art (FOMMA), was also set up under the advice of Abedin; see "Museum for Museum of Modern Art."
62. Abedin, "Painter of Miniatures."
63. Sanyal, *Vertical Woman*; Kowshik, "Remembering Baba Sanyal." For a description of artistic life in Lahore in the years immediately before 1947, see Gujral, *Brush with Life*, 34–54.
64. For accounts of Agha's life and works, see Hashmi, *Unveiling the Visible*, 34–37; Akbar Naqvi, *Image and Identity*, 147–79; Musarrat Hasan, *Zubeida Agha*; Shamsie, *Zubeida Agha*; Gauhar, "Zubeida Agha: Recent Paintings"; Taseer, "Zubeida Agha"; Ijaz ul Hassan, *Painting in Pakistan*, 51–54; and Imam, Hashmi, and Mirza, "Tributes to Zubeida Agha." An important reading of her career and work is provided by her brother, Agha Abdul Hamid, "Zubeida Agha: Profile." Agha was a collector of Amrita Sher-Gil's paintings. On Sher-Gil, see Dalmia, *Amrita Sher-Gil*.
65. On the work of early women artists, see Hashmi, *Unveiling the Visible*. During the 1940s and 1950s, women artists were primarily trained at the Department of Arts and Crafts at Punjab University, headed by Anna Molka Ahmed. See Anna Molka Ahmed, "The Coming Women Artists of Pakistan"; Sheikh Ahmed, "Art Schools of Lahore"; Anna Molka Ahmed, *Four Pakistani Women Painters*; and Anna Molka Ahmed, *Appreciating a Painting*.
66. Marjorie Husain, *Ahmed Parvez*; Akbar Naqvi, *Image and Identity*, 298–336; Aqil, *Char jadid musavvir*.
67. On the Rawalpindi Art Gallery, see Terry, "Art Gallery for Rawalpindi"; and Sagheer Hussain, "Rawalpindi Art Galleries." On her efforts to promote Chughtai's work despite his prickliness, see Abbas and Hamid, "Chand yaden," 91–92.
68. Musarrat Hasan, *Zubeida Agha*, 22–23; Hashmi, *Unveiling the Visible*, 36.
69. Jalal Uddin Ahmed, *Contemporary Painters of Pakistan*, 38.
70. Azra Zaman, "Contemporary Art in Pakistan," 82. Agha Abdul Hamid, "Zubeida Agha: Profile," 63.
71. Letters published in *Civil and Military Gazette*, June 4, June 11, and June 15, 1949, reproduced in Ijaz ul Hassan, *Painting in Pakistan*, 51–52; and discussed by Akbar Naqvi, *Image and Identity*, 147–49.
72. Taseer, "Zubeida Agha," 59.
73. Review originally published in *Scotsman* [n.d.], quoted in Agha Abdul Hamid, "Zubeida Agha: Profile," 63.
74. Jalal Uddin Ahmed, *Contemporary Painters of Pakistan*, 39.

75. Grabar, *Mediation of Ornament*, especially 234–37.
76. Ibid., xxiii–xxiv.
77. Naqvi's remark that the artist "belonged to a family of superior bureaucrats who have helped dictators to rule the country" is superficially correct but ignores the complexity of the emergence of Muslim modernity in South Asia as inextricably tied to what Hamza Alavi has identified as the "salariat." Akbar Naqvi, *Image and Identity*, 158; Alavi, "Politics of Ethnicity in India and Pakistan," in Alavi and Harriss, *South Asia*.
78. Adorno, "Lyric Poetry and Society," 211–29. I am grateful to Aamir Mufti's provocative reading of Faiz's lyric poetry for leading me to this understanding of Adorno. Mufti, *Enlightenment in the Colony*, chap. 5.
79. Adorno, "Lyric Poetry and Society," 215.
80. Ibid., 214.
81. Altieri, "Can Modernism Have a Future?" 135.
82. In her monograph on the artist, *Zubeida Agha*, 27, Musarrat Hasan aptly quotes Matisse to stress this point: "A work of art must carry within itself its complete significance and impose that upon the beholder even before he can identify the subject matter." The quotation can be found in Matisse, *Notes of a Painter*, 41; and Barr, *Matisse, His Art and His Public*, 122.
83. Hasan Habib quoted in Musarrat Hasan, *Zubeida Agha*, 21.
84. Gauhar, "Zubeida Agha: Recent Paintings," 2.
85. Adorno, "Lyric Poetry and Society," 213.
86. This is apart from her brother, Agha Abdul Hamid, and the critic Akbar Naqvi.
87. S. Amjad Ali, "Abstract Painting in Pakistan."
88. Azra Zaman, "Contemporary Art in Pakistan," 82.
89. Agha Abdul Hamid, "Zubeida Agha: Profile," 64.
90. For example, verse 17 in chapter 57 in the Qur'an ends by stating: "We have indeed made Our signs [*ayat*] clear, so that perhaps you might use your reason."
91. For example, on the ahistoricity and nonsubjective understanding of ornament in Victorian aesthetics, see Dutta, *Bureaucracy of Beauty*.
92. Shakir Ali, "Mera fan," 12. He probably saw Sher-Gil's exhibition in February 1937 at the Imperial Hotel in Delhi.
93. Akbar Naqvi, *Image and Identity*, 201–5.
94. Mitter, *Triumph of Modernism*, 181–202. For a description of artistic life in Bombay during the mid-1940s, see Gujral, *Brush with Life*, 55–70.
95. Dalmia, *Making of Modern Indian Art*, 27–29; Akbar Naqvi, *Image and Identity*, 203–4.
96. Akbar Naqvi, *Image and Identity*, 204. Compare his *Village Scene with Three Deers* (1941), in Akbar Naqvi, *Image and Identity*, 203, with A. A. Majeed's *The Bull Holiday* (1941), in Dalmia, *Making Of Modern Indian Art*, 29.
97. These are collected in a volume of the artist's writings. Shakir Ali, *Shakir 'Ali ki thariren*.

98. Akhlaque, "Manus sa shakhs"; Muhammad Akhtar, "Salimuzzaman Siddiqui."
99. His Pakistani critics and the artist himself have downplayed this aspect of his life. However, see the speech by Ijaz ul Hassan, "Takh'il parasti aur taraqqi pasandi kay tazad say dochar."
100. On his work, see the retrospective exhibition catalog, *André Lhote, 1885–1962*. Lhote's numerous Indian students included Bombay artists Akbar Padamsee and Jehangir Sabavala. Mitter, *Indian Art*, 206.
101. New Century Publishers issued an early English version in New York in 1948.
102. Marek, "Shakir Ali."
103. On the influence of Shakir Ali on the development of the National College of Arts pedagogy, see "National College of Arts"; and Sherezade Alam, "NCA through Time." Nadeem Omar Tarar has argued that Shakir Ali blocked the emergence of the National College of Arts as a Bauhaus type of design institution, by insisting on its role as an institution of fine arts, in "Aesthetic Modernism in the Post-colony."
104. Aamir Mufti has argued that, rather than simply addressing Muslims, the Urdu Progressive Writers "produced a double revolution in their time in Urdu literary culture. . . . They forced an encounter between this literary tradition and the most significant social forces in India in the early twentieth century, and, on the other, demonstrated that Urdu could be and was the terrain for truly national social imaginings." Mufti, *Enlightenment in the Colony*, 181.
105. Intizar Husain, *Chiraghon ka dhuan*, 28–79. On the latter group, see Javed, *Halqah-yi Arbab-i Zauq*. For an overview of Lahore's intelligentsia, see K. K. Aziz, *Coffee Houses of Lahore*.
106. Recent discussions in English include Pue, "Desert of Continuity"; and Patel, *Lyrical Movements, Historical Hauntings*. The literature on *jadidiyat* is vast but mostly scattered in various journals. For a recent collection of key essays, see Ishtiyaq Ahmad, *Jadidiyat ka tanqidi tanazur*.
107. Pue, "Desert of Continuity," 63–64. Italics mine.
108. Mufti, *Enlightenment in the Colony*; Toor, "Culture/Nation/State"; Pue, "Desert of Continuity."
109. Toor, "Culture/Nation/State."
110. Intizar Husain, *Chiraghon ka dhuan*, 112–26. *Khayal* was briefly revived in 1957, beginning with a special issue on the 100-year anniversary of the Indian Mutiny of 1857. Shakir Ali was very enthusiastic and contributed an essay, but the revival was stillborn. Ibid., 137–40. On T. S. Eliot's critique of English nationalism, see Wee, "From National Imperialism to Imperial Nationalism," in *Culture, Empire, and the Question of Being Modern*, 115–52.
111. Syed, "Shuddh kala," 87–98.
112. Suhail Ahmad Khan, "Darakht ki haqiqat," 183; Kishwar Naheed, *Shanasaiyan rusvaiyan*, 65–72.
113. Aqil, *Char jadid musavvir*, 9–18.
114. Akbar Naqvi, *Image and Identity*, 267–342; Mir, "Shakir Ali."

115. Shakir Ali, *Shakir ʿAli ki thariren*, 40.
116. Sajjad, "Siyah, sabz, surkh: sab bakvas," 94–95. The English words "poster" and "moods" are transliterated into Urdu in the original.
117. Intizar Husain, *Chiraghon ka dhuan*, 63, 73.
118. Ibid., 113.
119. Askari, who has written the most incisive criticism of Shakir Ali's paintings, similarly describes the newly arrived artist's divided persona: "I saw a person whose face simultaneously betrayed carelessness and propriety, disturbance and serenity and confusion mingled with self-assuredness. There was no regularity to his clothes, as if he wore whatever was handy. . . . When he spoke, it appeared that he wanted to say much, but was highly economical with his words, visibly suppressing his nervousness with a display of assurance." Askari, "Sachcha fankar," 72.
120. Ahmad Khan, "Talash karo, palo, baksh do."
121. Suhail Ahmad Khan, "Darakht ki haqiqat," 186.
122. Askari, one of the few Urdu critics well versed in French and British modernist literature and criticism, was intrigued by Shakir Ali and, wishing to find out more about his work, came to the artist's house soon after, under the guise of testing him on his awareness of modernism. "I was fearful that like others, he will also boast about his time in Europe, so I was prepared [to deflate him]," recounts Askari. The critic began by deliberately taunting modern art, claiming that it was merely the work of the mentally deranged. Shakir Ali refused to engage with Askari, however, simply stating that as an artist he could paint only from his own experience in a manner he knew best. Askari, "Sachcha fankar."
123. For discussions of Askari's criticism, see the essays in the section of *Annual of Urdu Studies* (2004) devoted to him; see especially Farooqi, "Towards a Prose of Ideas." Farooqi concludes: "Askari's thought is imbued with postcolonial insight. His greatest contribution to Urdu critical thought was his insistence that every literary culture had the responsibility to create its own cultural forms and had the right to judge them. . . . Askari's work opened the doors of Western literature in an intelligible way for the Urdu writer. He knew that with the expansion of technology the world was shrinking rapidly and the force of Western influences was unavoidable. His effort was to temper plain 'imitation' or borrowing with selection, investigation of the good and the bad, and the distilling of ideas through one's own experience. . . . He privileged 'difficult ideas' over simple thought. His own prose was the 'prose of ideas'—the vehicle for the development of a critical genre and a critical idiom in Urdu" (190). For a counterview of Askari's cultural particularism, see Mufti, *Enlightenment in the Colony*, 14–19.
124. Askari, "Sachcha fankar," 76–77.
125. Ibid., 78.
126. Askari, "Ka'inat gir khvab dekhnay vala," 83.
127. Ibid., 84–85.
128. Ibid., 85.

129. Shakir Ali, "Tajridi art," 22.
130. Shakir Ali, "Jadid musavviri kay rujhanat," 24. According to Intizar Husain, *Chiraghon ka dhuan*, 140–44, Sartre's writings, along with the works of Camus, began to be widely read by Lahori intellectuals around 1957, as "Eliot and Pound had by now become old hat for the *Urduwallas*" (141).
131. Shakir Ali, "Jadid musavviri kay rujhanat," 27.
132. Quoted in Pue, "Desert of Continuity," 66.
133. Shakir Ali, "Jadid musavviri kay rujhanat," 27–28.
134. Roxburgh, "Kamal al-Din Bihzad and Authorship in Persianate Painting."
135. Shakir Ali, "Bihzad kay nam."
136. On the links between Renaissance art and Bihzad, see, for example, Jardine and Brotton, *Global Interests*.
137. Ajmal, "Shakir ʿAli"; Ali Imam, "Shakir Ali."
138. Ijaz ul Hassan, "Takh'il parasti aur taraqqi pasandi kay tazad say dochar," 96; Akbar Naqvi, *Image and Identity*, 188–254.
139. The poet Faiz Ahmad Faiz's responses to the 1965 war are analogous to those of Shakir Ali and are sensitively discussed in Mufti, *Enlightenment in the Colony*, 225–32.
140. Intizar Husain, *Chiraghon ka dhuan*, 128.
141. Ibid., 228–29; Ajmal, "Shakir ʿAli."
142. The artist's sexual ambivalence invites comparison with the poet Miraji, one of the founders of Urdu literary modernism. Patel, *Lyrical Movements, Historical Hauntings*.
143. Martin, *Woman and Modernity*, 40. On the Islamic influences on Rilke, see Campbell, "Rilke's Duino Angels and the Angels of Islam."
144. Mir, "Shakir Ali," 4–5.
145. Ajmal, "Shakir Ali."
146. Sibte Hasan, "Azad mansh insan," 204–5.
147. Akbar Naqvi, "Lonely Vigil." Quoted in Nesom, "Abdur Rahman Chughtai," 341.
148. Altieri, "Can Modernism Have a Future?" 140.

CHAPTER 3

1. Arabic calligraphy here also refers to Persian and Urdu, which share the Arabic alphabet. Especially in artistic works, the slippage between a language that uses Arabic script, whether for religious or secular ends, and the textual tradition of Islam is productive of multiple meanings. On the traditional role of the calligrapher in the Islamic world, including examples from South Asia, see Schimmel, *Calligraphy and Islamic Culture*.
2. For a comparative study of calligraphic modernism, see Dadi, "Rethinking Calligraphic Modernism." For an attempted taxonomy of modern calligraphic paintings, see Wijdan Ali, *Modern Islamic Art*, chaps. 15 and 16.
3. Asher and Talbot, *India before Europe*, 213.

4. A few reproductions of *muraqqaʿ* albums have been published. See Stuart Cary Welch, *Emperors' Album*; al-Hasani, *St. Petersburg Muraqqa*; and Wright, *Muraqqaʿ*.
5. Roxburgh, *Prefacing the Image*, 141. For examples of later calligraphic exercises in Lahore, see Tahir, *Calligraphy and Calligraph-Art*.
6. David Roxburgh's detailed study of Timurid albums, *Prefacing the Image*, has attempted to derive internal criteria for writing an art history of Timurid painting and calligraphy. On the relationship between artists and calligraphers in the context of state patronage during the Safavid period, see Heger, "Status and Image of the Persianate Artist," 253–59. On Mughal albums, see Stuart Cary Welch, *Emperors' Album*, especially the essay by Annemarie Schimmel, "The Calligraphy and Poetry of the Kevorkian Album."
7. Sayyid-Ahmad, "Preface to the Amir Ghayb Beg Album," 27; Blair, *Islamic Calligraphy*, pts. 4 and 5.
8. On the aesthetic and spiritual values of calligraphy, see Ernst, "Spirit of Islamic Calligraphy."
9. On the myth of Mir-Ali Tabrizi as the inventor of *nastaʿliq*, see Thackston, *Album Prefaces*, 9n26.
10. M. Abdullah Chughtai, *Pak o Hind men Islami khattati*, 72–74.
11. Schimmel, *Calligraphy and Islamic Culture*, 31.
12. Aijaz Ahmad, *Ghazals of Ghalib*, 56.
13. Grabar, *Mostly Miniatures*, 93–96.
14. Blair, *Islamic Calligraphy*, 558–59. The beliefs of the *Hurufis* (Lettrists), followers of Fazlallah Astarabadi (died 1394), who had developed mystical conceptions of Arabic and Persian letters, provide another key resource for artistic reinvention of calligraphy during the twentieth century, especially in the Arab world, where calligraphic modernism was termed *hurufiyah*. See Shabout, *Modern Arab Art*, 67–77; and Daghir, *Al-Hurufiyah al-ʿArabiyah*. For an account of Astarabadi, see Bashir, *Fazlallah Astarabadi*. For a phenomenological reading of Arabic calligraphy in relation to figuration, see Gonzalez, "Double Ontology of Islamic Calligraphy."
15. Russell and Islam, *Life and Letters*; Constable, *A Selection from the Illustrations*, plate I.
16. Nineteenth- and twentieth-century calligraphic practices in South Asia are largely unstudied. For an example of continued practice from Iran, see Ekhtiar, "Innovation and Revivalism." For works by nineteenth- and twentieth-century traditional Iraqi calligraphers, see Aʿzami, *Tarajim khattati Baghdad al-muʿasirin*. On traditional calligraphers in South Asia during the modern era, see Shaghil, *Sahifah-yi khushnavisan*; and S. Amjad Ali, "Calligraphy in Pakistan."
17. For the importance of calligraphy in Islamicate traditions, see Schimmel, *Calligraphy and Islamic Culture*.
18. Blair's *Islamic Calligraphy*, the first substantial Western work on the subject, also surveys recent developments.
19. Cole, "Iranian Culture and South Asia," 31.

20. The literary historian Muhammad Sadiq writes: "Is it not a fact that Ghalib saw, as through a glass darkly, the dynamic character of British civilization? I shall say, yes, in a general way and intermittently; but it is undeniable that he never felt the impact of British civilization as a poet. He was, and remained till the end, a product of Mughal civilization." Sadiq, *History of Urdu Literature*, 228. Aijaz Ahmad states: "The tradition of poetry that reaches its first greatness with Hafiz and Rumi of Persia . . . ends its classical phase with Ghalib in Delhi." Aijaz Ahmad, *Ghazals of Ghalib*, xxi. For a perceptive study of Ghalib's poetry, see Schimmel, *Dance of Sparks*.
21. The art historian Akbar Naqvi, in his exposition of Sadequain's life and work, *Image and Identity*, 433, has suggested a convenient duality of influence that stresses both the centrality of Ghalib's influence on Sadequain's personal, existential imagery and the presence of Iqbal in Sadequain's murals and public and political works. Naqvi's conception is based on a simple binary between private/public and ego/politics, which he maps onto the Ghalib/Iqbal pair.
22. Sadequain was clearly inspired by futurism, in which Henri Bergson's philosophy plays a foundational role. For the relationship between futurism and Bergson's ideas, see Antliff, *Inventing Bergson*. One of Iqbal's key interlocutors is also Bergson, as argued later in this chapter.
23. Sadiq, *History of Urdu Literature*, 481, 488.
24. For a discussion of the influence of Western philosophers on Iqbal, see Rastogi, *Western Influence in Iqbal*. According to Annemarie Schimmel, the largest number of references in Iqbal's poetry and prose are to Hegel, Nietzsche, and Bergson. See her study, *Gabriel's Wing*.
25. Good translations of a selection of Iqbal's Urdu poems are available in Matthews, *Iqbal, a Selection of the Urdu Verse*.
26. Iqbal reportedly met Bergson in 1931, during a visit to Paris. Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing*, 51.
27. The conception of the Perfect Man, suggested by the great mystic Ibn ʿArabi (1165–1240), was developed further by ʿAbd al-Karim al-Jili (died 1428). Nicholson's *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*, published in 1921, discusses in detail al-Jili's conception of *al-insan al-kamil*. (Nicholson, with Iqbal's help, translated the latter's philosophical poem, *The Secrets of the Self*, into English in 1920.) See also Rastogi, *Western Influence in Iqbal*, 78–80; Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing*, 118–20, 323–27; and Aziz Ahmad, *Iqbal: na'i tashkil*, 303–19.
28. Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing*, 323.
29. Ibid., 119–20.
30. Iqbal's critique of Nietzsche's lack of spiritual vision is found in Iqbal, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, 194–95.
31. Ibid., 114–15; Schimmel, *Gabriel's Wing*, 326. See also Aziz Ahmad, *Islamic Modernism*, 142; and Aziz Ahmad, *Iqbal: na'i tashkil*, 151–53, 220–35.
32. The poem is found in the volume *Bal-i jibril*, included in *Kulliyat-i Iqbal Urdu*, 122–

169/414–421. A translation is available in Matthews, *Iqbal, a Selection of the Urdu Verse*, 112–21.

33. Aziz Ahmad, *Islamic Modernism*, 145.
34. Ibid., 146. See also Sadiq, *History of Urdu Literature*, 452.
35. Iqbal, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, 52.
36. Ibid., 52.
37. Ibid., 54–55.
38. Ibid., 55. Italics mine.
39. The foremost British orientalist scholar, R. A. Nicholson, who translated, with Iqbal's help, the latter's Persian poem *Asrar-i Khudi* into English, noted: "We cannot regard [Iqbal's] ideas as typical of his co-religionists. They involve a radical change in the Moslem mind, and their real importance is not to be measured by the fact that such a change is unlikely to occur within a calculable time." Nicholson, "Introduction," xxxi.
40. Iqbal, "Qalandar ki pehchan," in *Zarb-i kalim*, 41/503.
41. Akbar Naqvi, *Image and Identity*, 432.
42. The last work made by Sadequain, executed on his deathbed, was calligraphing verses by Iqbal; see Akhund et al., *Sadequain: The Holy Sinner*, 157.
43. According to Malik Ram, in "Sadequain khattati aur Ghalib," 65, the artist reported that he possessed seven Qu'rans calligraphed by his ancestors and family and that his father was also known for his skill in calligraphy.
44. On the allegations of sectarianism and the Hinduization of All India Radio music after 1947, see Lelyveld, "Upon the Subdominant."
45. Sadequain, "Khud navisht."
46. In an interview with the journalist Rehana Hakim, Sadequain claimed that his "ancestors have been practicing [calligraphy] for seven generations." Hakim, "Sadequain Is a Showman," 112.
47. Saeed, *Sadequain*, 3, writes: "Did he graduate instead under the aegis of the examination board of Agra University, in which case he could have taken the annual examinations in Amroha?" For more biographical details, see Amrohi, "Sadequain ba haisiyat marsiya nigar."
48. Akbar Naqvi, *Image and Identity*, 397; Saeed, *Sadequain*, 3–4.
49. On his early years in Pakistan, see "Sadequain," *Pakistan Quarterly* 7, no. 1 (Spring 1957). See also Akhund et al., *Sadequain: The Holy Sinner*, plates 1–13.
50. Saiyid Ali Naqvi, "My Cousin Sadequain"; S. Amjad Ali, "The Trail of Paint."
51. The filmmaker Tarique Masud has made a documentary on Sultan titled *Adam Surat* (1989). And photographer Nasir Ali Mamun has recently published a book of photographs of Sultan, *Guru*.
52. Akbar Naqvi, *Image and Identity*, 403–4; Saeed, *Sadequain*, 3–4.
53. Salima Hashmi has suggested that Sadequain painted a horizontal work, *Coffee Pickers* (ca. 1957), that was probably based on Zubeida Agha's relief *Cotton Pick-*

ers (1947). From Shakir Ali (and Picasso), Sadequain appropriated the imagery of Europa and the Bull. Hashmi, "The 'Other Story,'" 48–53, 50.

54. Akbar Naqvi, *Image and Identity*, 365.
55. Akhund et al., *Sadequain: The Holy Sinner*, 30.
56. Walter Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator," in *Illuminations*, 70–82; Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations*, 211–44.
57. Based on Akhund et al., *Sadequain: The Holy Sinner*, plates 47–99 on pp. 212–46 and 480–91. See also Sadequain, *Time's Treasures: A Mural in the Library of the State Bank of Pakistan*.
58. My identification of three groups differs from the otherwise insightful discussion of the mural in *Holy Sinner*, 480–91, where five groups are identified. See also Shamim Ahmed, "The Treasures of Time"; and Akhund et al., *Sadequain: The Holy Sinner*, 12–14.
59. "Sadequain's Mangla Murals," *Pakistan Times*, November 23, 1967, p. 26; Mir, "A Thinker through Images"; "Painting by the Acre." For a perceptive reading of Iqbal from a progressive angle, see Sibte Hasan, "Iqbal's Concept of Man," in *The Battle of Ideas in Pakistan*, 231–80.
60. Recently celebrated in a massive exhibition and catalog, *Sadequain: The Holy Sinner*.
61. Akbar Naqvi, *Image and Identity*, 409: "How fast Sadequain's rise to fame can be gauged from the fact that in 1959, Ajmal Hussain was considered a far better painter by Yunus Saeed, the most authoritative voice of art criticism in Karachi."
62. Saeed, *Sadequain*, 7–8.
63. Ibid., 12.
64. Mitter, *Art and Nationalism in Colonial India*, 377–80.
65. Araeen, *The Other Story*, 14. See also chap. 4.
66. Sadequain, *Ruqʿat-i Sadiqaini*.
67. Ibid., [n.p.], letter dated May 5, 1964.
68. Ibid., [n.p.], letter dated February 22, 1965.
69. Ibid., [n.p.], letter dated March 17, 1965.
70. Ibid., [n.p.], letter dated January 31, 1964.
71. Ibid., [n.p.], letter dated January 21, 1967.
72. Ibid., [n.p.], "Zamima numa."
73. Ibid., [n.p.], January 3, 1964; Syed Abid Ali Shah, "Sadequain—The Man I Knew," 152.
74. Dadi, "Rethinking Calligraphic Modernism."
75. Sadequain, *Sadequain*. The Sadequain Foundation is working to document this period.
76. The Indian scholar Abul Kalam Azad had recovered the legacy of Sarmad in a text dated 1910. Azad, *Sufi Sarmad Shahid*. On Sarmad's religious affiliation, see Katz, "Identity of a Mystic."
77. Zamindar, "Sadequain," 58. Akbar Naqvi has suggested that artists such as Sade-

quain can be viewed in the Sufi tradition of *malamat* (transgression). Akbar Naqvi, *Image and Identity*, 364–96 and passim.

78. Balzac, *Unknown Masterpiece*. "It was not difficult for Picasso to rally to the idea of illustrating *The Unknown Masterpiece*. No one has ever been able to discover exactly how the project came about. It is possible that Pierre Reverdy, who was a great reader of Balzac and a close friend of Picasso's, suggested the story to Picasso himself, or it is possible that Vollard proposed the subject. In any case, Picasso was at work in 1927 on the etchings that would be used in the extraordinary *livre de luxe* published by Vollard in 1931. In 1927 Vollard bought fifteen etchings from Picasso of which thirteen were to be designated as illustrations for *The Unknown Masterpiece*. These etchings are predominantly on the theme of the artist and his model, including, for instance, a motif that reappears in later years: the painter absorbed in painting a nude while the nude stands behind him watching." Ashton, *Fable of Modern Art*, 89–90.
79. Fox, *Picasso for Vollard*.
80. For a recent study, see Florman, *Myth and Metamorphosis*.
81. "In these etchings [for *The Unknown Masterpiece*] Picasso began posing the implicit question: where, really, is the picture? What part of the artist's imagination is most fecund—that inspired by his direct attention to the model, or that lodged in the distant imagined beginnings, renewed each time he approaches his canvas and all but independent of the model? . . . (In one plate, the painter stands with two models, brush in hand, but he himself merges with the wall as though he were in fact a painting) and one pursued throughout the rest of his working life. What is a painting? Is it an image? A creation? An extension of the self? A detached object among objects? On the other hand, what does the painter love? His created embodiment of his beloved or the beloved herself; his evocation of his own feelings towards her, or the responsive, warm-blooded creature? Where is the painting? Does it hover between artist and observer? Is it in the material of the image itself, discrete from all else in the world? Or is it rather lodged in the obsessive imagination of the artist and purely re-presented so that none but the creator can truly recognize it?" Ashton, *Fable of Modern Art*, 90.
82. Mitchell, "The Stage of Modernity," in *Questions of Modernity*, 3–34.
83. S. Amjad Ali, "Sadequain, 1968–69."
84. Ibid., 7–8, 11.
85. Sadequain, *Rubaʿiyat-i Sadiqain Naqqash*, 2nd ed. (with illustrations); *Tazah rubaʿiyat-i Sadiqain Naqqash* (without illustrations).
86. Schimmel, "Poetry and Calligraphy."
87. S. Amjad Ali, "Sadequain, 1968–69," 10.
88. Modified translation after Frances Pritchett, ⟨http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00ghalib/043/43_05.html⟩.
89. Modified translation after Frances Pritchett, ⟨http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00ghalib/131/131_04.html⟩.

90. For a translation by Abul Hasanat, see Sadequain, "Preface to the Bayaz-e-Sadequaini." A selection of translations from this volume by Mehmood Jamal are in Akhund et al., *Sadequain: The Holy Sinner*, 558–70.
91. Fatehpuri, "Sadequain Urdu rubaʿi ka Khayyam." See also Fatehpuri, "Sadequain aik nabgha-i fan." Sadequain had met the poet Josh Malihabadi in Delhi, who also composed *Rubaʿi*s.
92. Sadequain, *Rubaʿiyat-i Sadiqain Naqqash*, 2nd ed., 1.
93. On the importance of the myth of Mani, see Roxburgh, *Prefacing the Image*; and Soucek, "Nizami on Painters and Painting."
94. On the significance of Sarmad for Sadequain's imagery of decapitation, see Akbar Naqvi, *Image and Identity*, 425.
95. Sadequain specifically addresses the scholar Sayyid Sulaiman Nadvi (died 1953), who had written a volume on Omar Khayyam. Nadvi, *Khayyam aur us ke savanih va tasanif par naqidanah nazar*. Nadvi follows up the work of the renowned scholar Shibli, who had earlier written a major study in Urdu on Persian poetry.
96. Razvi, "Beheld by the Mirror," 109.
97. Sadequain, *Rubaʿiyat-i Sadiqain Naqqash*, 2nd ed., 56.
98. Hashmi, "The 'Other Story,'" 51.
99. S. Ali Imam, "Aesthetic Problems of Calligraphy in Pakistani Paintings"; Akbar Naqvi, "Cultural Overtones in the Use of Calligraphy." The retrospective catalog is Akhund et al., *Sadequain: The Holy Sinner*.
100. Wood, "The Avant-Garde in the Early Twentieth Century," in *Challenge of the Avant-Garde*, 190.
101. For example, see Foster, *Compulsive Beauty*, xiii. See also Wood, "The Avant-Garde in the Early Twentieth Century," in *Challenge of the Avant-Garde*, 191, 197.
102. Aijaz Ahmed, *Ghazals of Ghalib*, xxiv.
103. The significance of calligraphy in Islamic civilization has yet to be fully appreciated. For the role of the calligrapher in the Islamic world, including examples from South Asia, see Schimmel, *Calligraphy and Islamic Culture*.
104. Khair, "Modernism and Modernity."
105. Messick, *Calligraphic State*, 5.
106. Kalim, *Nuqush-i raʿna: mausum, muraqqaʿ-i khattati*; Kalim, *Nuqush-i raʿna, mausum, Jalvat-i raʿna-yi khattati*.
107. However, from the beginning, the state never formalized or instituted a program for formally training calligraphers or for modernizing the practice of calligraphy, despite the fact that most Urdu books and newspapers until the mid-1980s were calligraphed by hand and then reproduced for mass distribution by lithography. The training of calligraphers continued in the informal sector. The state thus usurped the creative activities of a few gifted individuals for symbolic propaganda, while relegating the rest to invisibility.
108. Critic Akbar Naqvi notes: "In his [Sadequain's] easel calligraphy he used the cheapest material, such as markers, to draw and colour on canvas and paper. It was not

the impression of beauty and light which pervaded these works, but the message of *qahar* [fear] and damnation against an erring man which informed it. A time came when he did not write but drew letters with a pencil and then inked and coloured them with markers without bothering to erase the drawing marks. . . . Dissenting in every way with calligraphy proper and its rules, ancient and modern, as invented in the Middle and Near East, Sadequain took us into the sociology of promotion and political complicity." Akbar Naqvi, *Image and Identity*, 425–29.

109. M. F. Husain, "Husain on Sadequain's Art."
110. Zamindar, "Sadequain," 61–64.
111. Ibid., 64.
112. Hakim, "Sadequain Is a Showman," 114. I am, of course, simplifying the picture considerably. The ideological project of the Zia era is riddled with contradictions. For example, for details about Sadequain's murals and his controversial exhibition of nudes in 1976, see Akbar Naqvi, *Image and Identity*, 429–36; and Zamindar, "Sadequain."
113. Žižek, "Afterword," 70.
114. Sultan Ahmed, "Sadequain Shuns None"; Hakim, "Sadequain Is a Showman," 115.
115. Sultan Ahmed, "Sadequain: The Demon and the Genie."
116. Ijaz ul Hassan, *Painting in Pakistan*, 84.

CHAPTER 4

1. For the argument concerning the centrality of installation practice in contemporary art, see Groys, "Topology of Contemporary Art."
2. Terry Smith, "Contemporary Art and Contemporaneity." A version of this essay is also available as Terry Smith, "Introduction," in *Antinomies of Art and Culture*, 1–19. This volume contains other significant theorizations of contemporary practice.
3. *Minimalism and Beyond: Rasheed Araeen at Tate Britain*.
4. See the special issue of *Third Text* for debate on this exhibition, no. 6 (Spring 1989).
5. Araeen has published accounts of his career in a number of informative essays and interviews. For an accessible overview, see Araeen, "The Artist as Post-colonial Subject."
6. Key critical essays include Bickers, "From Object to Subject"; Roberts, "Postmodernism and the Critique of Ethnicity"; Phillipi, "Impatience of Signs"; Overy, "New Works of Rasheed Araeen"; Brett, "Introduction"; Brett, "Abstract Activist"; and Buddensieg, "Visibility in the Art World."
7. Araeen, "Come What May," 147.
8. I am grateful for the generosity of the artist in conducting an extensive email correspondence with me. It may be noted that Araeen himself neither fully sanctions the analysis offered here nor considers some of the works examined here to be the most significant of his career. The artist understands his work as participating fully in "mainstream" modernism and not as part of an alternative or separate trajectory

of the modern. He specifically does not view his references to popular South Asian and Islamic forms as informed by a genealogy of "tradition" but rather as drawing from "urban vernacular culture of cities in Pakistan" (email, July 30, 2008). However, I understand many of these urban forms to be complex and as including fragmentary genealogies drawn from "tradition." More pertinent, I remain interested in viewing modernism itself—or what Huyssen, in "Geographies of Modernism," 194, has termed "modernism at large"—as internally differentiated and as partly incorporating intellectual and aesthetic legacies of the non-West, one aspect of which forms the focus of this book.

9. Hanru, "An Interview with Rasheed Araeen," 104; Brett, "Abstract Activist," 81.
10. Rasheed Araeen, email communication with author, April 10, 2009.
11. Amra Ali, "Stranger at Home."
12. Dyer, "Rasheed Araeen in Conversation," 22.
13. Ibid., 24; Brett, "Introduction," 8–9.
14. Araeen, *Making Myself Visible*, 64. More recently he has observed: "Minimalism, one of the most important postwar avant-garde movements, depends on the symmetry and seriality that are fundamental to the geometry of Islamic art." Araeen, "Geometry in Islam," 10.
15. Araeen, *Making Myself Visible*, 43–54 and 64–65.
16. Araeen, "A Very Special British Issue?" 140.
17. Rasheed Araeen, email communication with author, April 10, 2009.
18. Araeen, "How I Discovered My Oriental Soul," 92.
19. Ibid., 93.
20. Ibid., 95.
21. On the presence and activities of non-Western artists in the United Kingdom, see Araeen, *The Other Story*; Araeen, "A Very Special British Issue?"; Dyer, "Rasheed Araeen in Conversation"; and Hall, "Black Diaspora Artists in Britain."
22. Araeen, "A Very Special British Issue?" 135.
23. Araeen, *The Other Story*, 14.
24. Araeen, "How I Discovered My Oriental Soul," 95.
25. Araeen has addressed this issue in a number of essays. See, for example, Araeen, "When the Naughty Children."
26. For recent assessments of the Black Arts movement, see Bailey, Baucom, and Boyce, *Shades of Black*. A set of readings is assembled in Owusu, *Black British Culture and Society*.
27. See note 8 for the difference between my framing of an aspect of Araeen's work and his assessment of it.
28. Araeen, "The Terror of Cultural Invasions," 69–72.
29. Araeen, "The Third Text Story."
30. A recent essay by Araeen published in a newly launched Pakistani art magazine is "Modernism, Postcolonial Nation States Art Criticism."
31. On the cultural-political hegemony of whiteness, see Dyer, *White*.

32. Rasheed Araeen, email communication with author, July 30, 2008. For a Lacanian-Fanonian reading of Araeen's *Narcissus*, see Phillipi, "Impatience of Signs."
33. As pointed out by John Roberts and Paul Overy in their essays.
34. Rasheed Araeen, email communication with author, April 12, 2008. The titles of some of Araeen's other works from the beginning of his career have Indic and Islamic allusions that also require unpacking, for example, *Char Yar* ("four friends," which might refer to the first four caliphs of Islam or to four prominent South Asian Sufis) (1968); *Chakras* (Sanskrit philosophical term denoting circular spiritual energy) (1969–70); and *Bismullah* ("In the name of the Mullah") (1988).
35. For more on *The Golden Verses*, see Araeen, "The Artist as Post-colonial Subject," 251; Sardar, *Postmodernism and the Other*, chap. 5; Barnett, "Rugs R Us (and Them)"; and Brett, "Abstract Activist."
36. See the catalog, Daftari, *Without Boundary*. For a critique of the depoliticized character of this exhibition, see Farhat, "MoMA's Without Boundary Exhibit."
37. Brett, "Abstract Activist," 84.
38. Barnett, "Rugs R Us (and Them)," 25.
39. Werbner, *Imagined Diasporas*, 258–59. Italics mine.
40. Barnett, "Rugs R Us (and Them)," 25n44.
41. Roberts, "Postmodernism and the Critique of Ethnicity," n.p. See also Hall, "Black Diaspora Artists in Britain," 4–5. "Contemporaneity" better characterizes the artist's work, as the term "postmodernism" has come under recent critique. For example, art historian Terry Smith notes, in "Contemporary Art and Contemporaneity," 702, "the evaporation of postmodernism as a one generation wonder, and the isolation of postmodernity as a fate of the West (or, at least, of many parts and elements of it), but not the world. Nor does postmodernity explain enough of what is happening in what remains of the West as the world migrates to it, everyone changing as they come and go."
42. Overy, "New Works of Rasheed Araeen," 17.
43. On these works in which he uses photographs of blood from Eid sacrifice, Araeen has stated, "The 'primitive' periphery is cleared of all traces of expressionism (bloody ritual) which is then transferred to the central space (a cross/Ad Reinhardt). The Modernity of Minimalism is thus 'restored' to where it came from, Islamic culture, which remains segmented (four parts) and occupies corners of the dominant culture." Quoted in Roberts, "Postmodernism and the Critique of Ethnicity," n.p.
44. On the conception of media and other "scapes" characterizing globalization, see Appadurai, "Disjuncture and Difference."
45. For more on these works, see Araeen, "The Artist as Post-colonial Subject"; and Overy, "New Works of Rasheed Araeen," 13–15.
46. For an extended discussion of the Saddam poster circulation in Karachi, see Dadi, "Ghostly Sufis and Ornamental Shadows."
47. See, for example, essays in Jeffords and Rabinovitz, *Seeing Through the Media*.

48. His later work increasingly attends to the mediatized world, but Araeen himself has become more pessimistic about the ability of (modernist) art practice to meaningfully intervene in art institutions that are themselves becoming increasingly globalized and commodified. Araeen, "Come What May," 138.
49. In his analysis of Faiz Ahmad Faiz's lyric poetry, *Enlightenment in the Colony*, Aamir Mufti has placed Faiz's poetry in a "stretched" Adornian framework, mediated by the later writings of Edward Said (238). Mufti has perceptively argued that "secularism and even atheism live in the South Asian world in great proximity to the religious. . . . A Marxist and internationalist poet, Faiz is nevertheless immersed in the religious language of mystical Indian Islam (222). . . . [In Faiz] the disavowal of Indianness is an irreducible feature of Indianness itself (239)." As primarily a visual artist, Rasheed Araeen is obviously far less tied to the conceptions of experience within Urdu than a poet like Faiz; nevertheless, Mufti's formulation remains suggestive, especially for Araeen's later work.
50. Vasl website is ⟨http://www.vaslart.org/⟩.
51. From an untitled statement by Naiza Khan, dated 2002.
52. For example, the artist Ellen Harvey's *New York Beautification Project*, ⟨http://⟨www.nybeautification.org⟩.
53. Hung, "Zhang Dali's Dialogue."
54. For a discussion of the recent Western fascination with henna practices and of the work of a Sudanese henna artist, see Salah Hassan, "Henna Mania." See also Maira, "Henna and Hip Hop."
55. From a statement by Naiza Khan, "Henna Hands—Site Specific Work," dated 2002.
56. From an untitled statement by Naiza Khan, dated 2002.
57. Verkaaik, *Migrants and Militants*.
58. Naiza Khan, email communication with author, March 8, 2007.
59. For a good biography of Thanawi, see Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *Ashraf 'Ali Thanawi*.
60. Allegory has assumed new significance in postmodern and postcolonial art. See, for example, Dadi, "Shirin Neshat's Photographs."
61. For example, *The Sieve—I* (2002) and *The Sieve—II* (2004) allegorically refer to the U.S. bombing of Afghanistan in 2001–2.
62. Greenfield, *Girl Culture*. For examples of Greenfield's work, see ⟨http://www.viiphoto.com/photographer.html⟩.
63. Shackle and Majeed, *Hali's Musaddas*.
64. Robinson, *Islam and Muslim History*.
65. Minault, *Secluded Scholars*; Yaqin, "Truth, Fiction and Autobiography."
66. Minault, *Secluded Scholars*, 101.
67. For example, an English translation is available on a South African website. *Bahishti Zewar: Moulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi (Rahmatullah Alaihi)* ⟨http://www.jamiat.co.za/library/books/bzewar/bahishti_zewar.htm⟩.

68. Barbara Metcalf, *Perfecting Women*, 12–13.
69. Yaqin, "Truth, Fiction and Autobiography," 382–83; Naim, "Prize-Winning *Adab*," 307–8.
70. Barbara Metcalf, "Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanavi."
71. Yaqin, "Truth, Fiction and Autobiography," 387–88.
72. Hashmi, *Unveiling the Visible*.
73. Rouse, "The Outsider(s) Within."
74. Shaheed, "The Other Side of the Discourse," 147.
75. Hashmi, *Unveiling the Visible*, 8.
76. Mahmood, *Politics of Piety*, 17.
77. Naiza Khan, email communication with author, March 8, 2007.
78. Siddiqa, "Faith Wars." For an assessment of the historical scope and limitations of South Asian Sufi syncretism, see Alam, *Languages of Political Islam*.
79. Khan has stated: "I did not make the chastity belt for a long time, resisting the idea of reproducing something without altering it, although it has been in my mind for ages, (you know I first saw the belt in the Doge Palace Museum in Venice in 1995)[;] and while doing this work, I was also constantly thinking about it. . . . So the belt has finally been made! With a zip rather than a lock . . . that implies the fact that this object has a flexibility and the owner has a 'choice' in the matter." Email communication with author, March 8, 2007.

EPILOGUE

1. On these exhibitions, see Flood, "From the Prophet to Postmodernism." On the status of Islamic art after September 11, 2001, see also Winegar, "The Humanity Game." For critiques of the first-ever Museum of Modern Art exhibition on modern Islamic art, in 2006, titled "Without Boundary: Seventeen Ways of Looking," see Farhat, "MoMA's Without Boundary Exhibit"; and Green, "MoMA Keeps the Walls Clean."
2. Flood, "From the Prophet to Postmodernism," 43. This is clearly an analogue to the process of identifying pro-American Muslims as "good Muslims." On the "good Muslim" label, see Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim*.
3. On the distinctive values of neoliberalism, see Wendy Brown, "Neoliberalism and the End of Liberal Democrary," in *Edgework*, 37–59.
4. Romasa, *Nagori: Voice of Conscience*.
5. Cartwright Hall, Bradford Museum. The catalog is Hashmi and Poovaya-Smith, *An Intelligent Rebellion*.
6. At Huddersfield Art Gallery, Oldham Art Gallery, and other venues. The catalog is *Tampered Surface: Six Artists from Pakistan*.
7. At the Brunei Gallery, London, and other venues. The catalog is Wilcox, *Pakistan*.
8. The Pakistan show was installed at Harris Museum and Art Gallery, Preston. The catalog is Rangasamy et al., *ArtSouthAsia*.
9. At Manchester Art Gallery and Asia House in London. The catalog is Dawood and Nasar, *Beyond the Page*.

10. Website is ⟨http://www.vaslart.org⟩.
11. These include *Playing with a Loaded Gun: Contemporary Art in Pakistan*, at Apex Art, in New York City, in 2003; and *The Emperor's New Clothes: Dress, Politics, and Identity in Contemporary Pakistan*, at Talwar Gallery, in New York City, in 2009.
12. Website is ⟨http://www.greencardamom.net⟩.
13. Sood, "Cross-Border Traffic."
14. At the Eicher Gallery in New Delhi, the Gallery Chemould in Mumbai, and the National College of Arts Gallery in Lahore. The catalog is *Mappings: Shared Histories, A Fragile Self*.
15. Atteqa Ali, "Impassioned Play," 197–214.
16. Shown at the National Gallery of Modern Art, Mumbai. The catalog is Doshi and Mirza, *Beyond Borders*.
17. Whiles, "Miniature Manoeuvres."
18. The artist's work can be viewed on her website, ⟨http://www.sairawasim.com⟩. For an insightful essay on her work, see Sloan, "A Divine Comedy of Errors."
19. Shown at the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum, Ridgefield, Connecticut, and the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco. The catalog is Nasar, *Karkhana: A Contemporary Collaboration*, which contains key essays on the contemporary miniature.
20. Nasar, "Pakistan: An Art of Extremes"; Mirza, "After a Fashion"; Hashmi, "Pakistani Art," in Dalmia and Hashmi, *Memory, Metaphor, Mutations*, 27–29.
21. Hashmi, *Unveiling the Visible*, 131–34.
22. Artist's statement, 2008.
23. Dalmia and Hashmi, *Memory, Metaphor, Mutations*, 26.
24. For more information on this artist, see the catalog, *Rashid Rana: Identical Views*.
25. Hashmi, *Unveiling the Visible*, 185–87.
26. Le Brun's painting is also referred to as *The Tent of Darius*; Harris, *Seventeenth-Century Art and Architecture*, 306–7.
27. Email communication with the artist, August 7, 2009.
28. For a discussion of this work, see Atteqa Ali, *Emperor's New Clothes*, 5–10.
29. Mehta's conception provided the framework for the exhibition *Fatal Love: South Asian American Art Now*, February 27, 2005–June 5, 2005, at the Queens Museum of Art, New York. ⟨http://www.queensmuseum.org/exhibitions/fatal_love.htm⟩.
30. The artist's website is ⟨http://baniabidi.com/⟩. See also Whiles, "Profile: Bani Abidi"; and Cincotta, "Featured Artist." On the historical reception of the memory of Muhammad Bin Qasim in Sindh and larger South Asia, see Manan Ahmed, "The Many Histories Of Muhammad B. Qasim."
31. For example, see the policy report by the International Crisis Group, *Pakistan: Karachi's Madrasas and Violent Extremism*. For comparative and more historically informed assessments, see Jamal Malik, *Madrasas in South Asia*; and Hefner and Zaman, *Schooling Islam*.
32. For an overview of the artist's work, see Dawood and Nasar, *Hamra Abbas*.

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PLATE 1.
Abdur Rahman Chughtai, The Wasted Vigil, *illustration in* Muraqqaʿ-i Chughtaʾi, *1928. Watercolor on paper. Dimensions n.a. (Reproduced with permission of Arif Rahman Chughtai, © Chughtai Museum Trust, Lahore.)*

PLATE 2.
Abdur Rahman Chughtai, Fame, *illustration in* ʿAmal-i Chughtaʾi, *1968. Watercolor on paper. Dimensions n.a. (Reproduced with permission of Arif Rahman Chughtai, © Chughtai Museum Trust, Lahore.)*

PLATE 3. *Abdur Rahman Chughtai*, The Story Teller, *illustration in* ʿAmal-i Chughtaʾi, *1968. Watercolor on paper. Dimensions n.a. (Reproduced with permission of Arif Rahman Chughtai, © Chughtai Museum Trust, Lahore.)*

PLATE 4. *Abdur Rahman Chughtai,* The Desert in Love, *illustration in* ʿAmal-i Chughtaʾi, *1968. Watercolor on paper. Dimensions n.a. (Reproduced with permission of Arif Rahman Chughtai, © Chughtai Museum Trust, Lahore.)*

PLATE 5. *Zainul Abedin*, Santhal Maidens, *ca. 1950s. Oil. Dimensions n.a. (Courtesy Mainul Abedin.)*

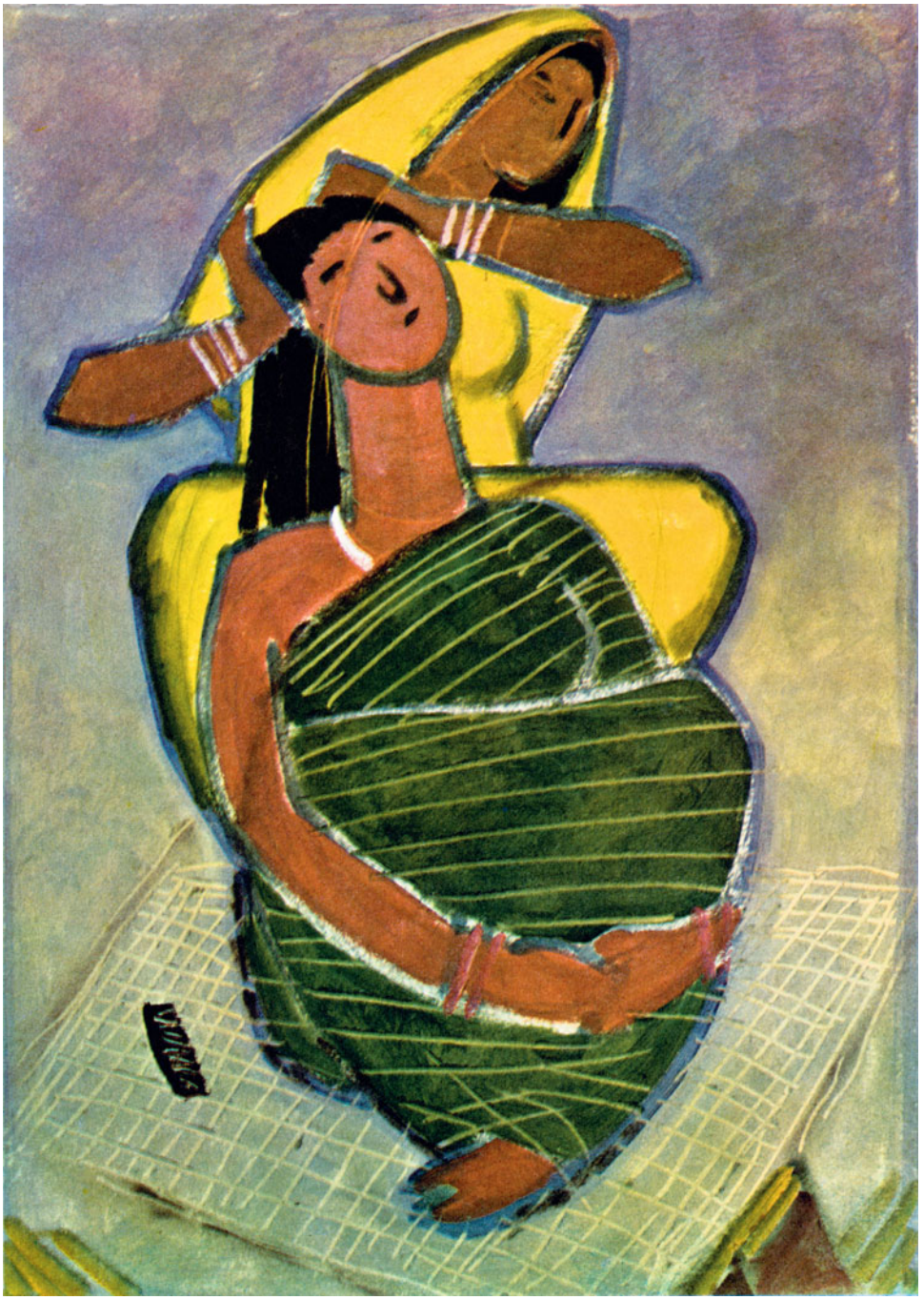


PLATE 6. *Zainul Abedin*, Women Dressing Hair, *1953*.
Oil on paper. 51 × 36 cm. (Courtesy Mainul Abedin.)

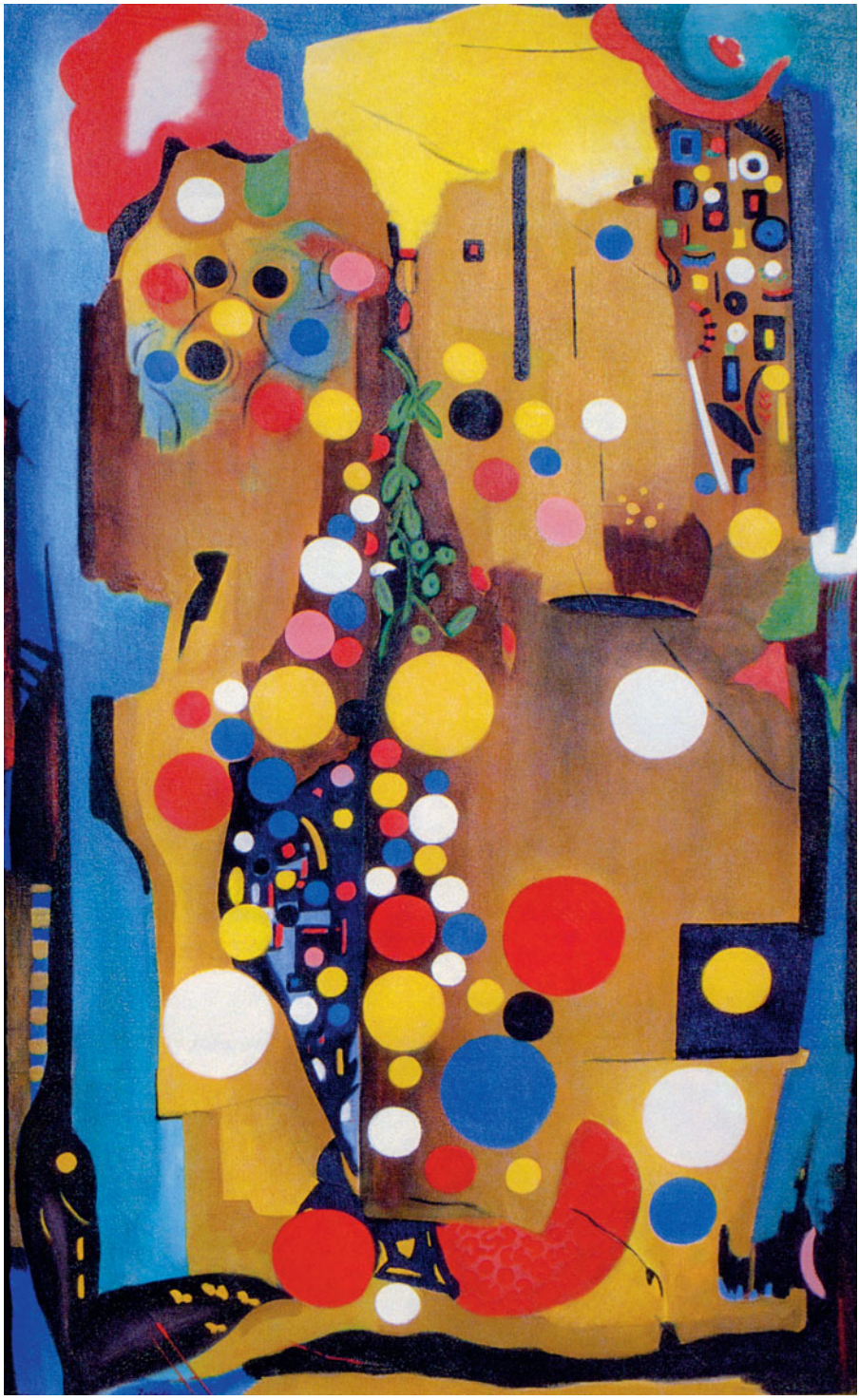


PLATE 7. *Zubeida Agha*, Carnival, *1978. Oil on canvas. 132 × 91.5 cm. (Courtesy Agha Arshad Ali.)*

PLATE 8.
Zubeida Agha, Flowers in Front of a Window, *1984. Oil on canvas. 137 × 61 cm. (Collection of Agha Arshad Ali.)*

PLATE 9.
Shakir Ali, Woman with Bird in Cage, *1968. Oil on canvas. 235 × 235 cm. (Collection of Fakir and Shahnaz Aijazuddin.)*

PLATE 10.
Shakir Ali, The Dark Moon, *1965. Oil on canvas. 152 × 99 cm. (Collection of Fakir and Shahnaz Aijazuddin.)*

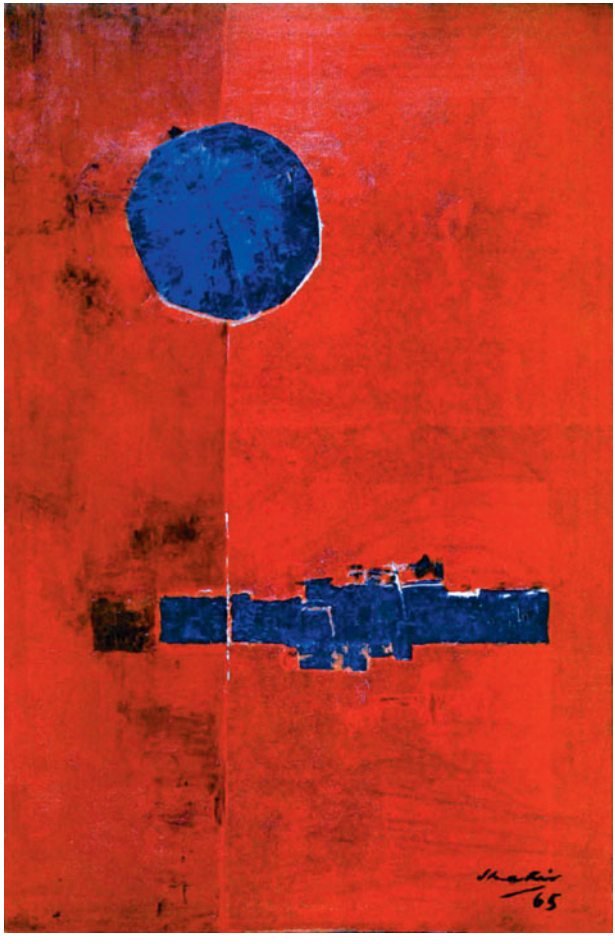


PLATE 11. *Shakir Ali*, Verse by Ghalib, *1969. Oil on canvas. Dimensions n.a. (From S. Nasir Shamsie, "Shakir Ali,"* Focus on Pakistan *2, no. 2 [1972]: 53.)*

PLATE 12. *Sadequain, painting based on Iqbal's poetry, ca. 1977. Oil on canvas. Dimensions n.a. (From* Mu ʿjizah-yi fan ki hai khun-i jigar se namud *[1981], 63. Courtesy Sadequain Foundation. Collection of Pakistan National Council for the Arts, Islamabad.)*

PLATE 13.
Sadequain, A Person at Sandspit, *1960. Oil on board. 89 × 115 cm. (Collection of Syeda Akhtar Ispahani.)*

PLATE 14.
Sadequain, painting based on Ghalib's poetry, 1968. With calligraphy by Sadequain. Oil on canvas. 98 × 86 cm. (Courtesy Wahab Jaffer Collection, a part of the Rangoonwala Collection.)

دردِ دل لاکھوں کتب جاؤں اُن کو دکھلاؤں
اُنگلیاں فگار اپنی، خامہ خوں چکاں اپنا

PLATE 15. *Rasheed Araeen*, The Golden Verses, *1990. Artangel billboard project, Cleveland Museum and Art Gallery, 1991. (Courtesy Rasheed Araeen.)*

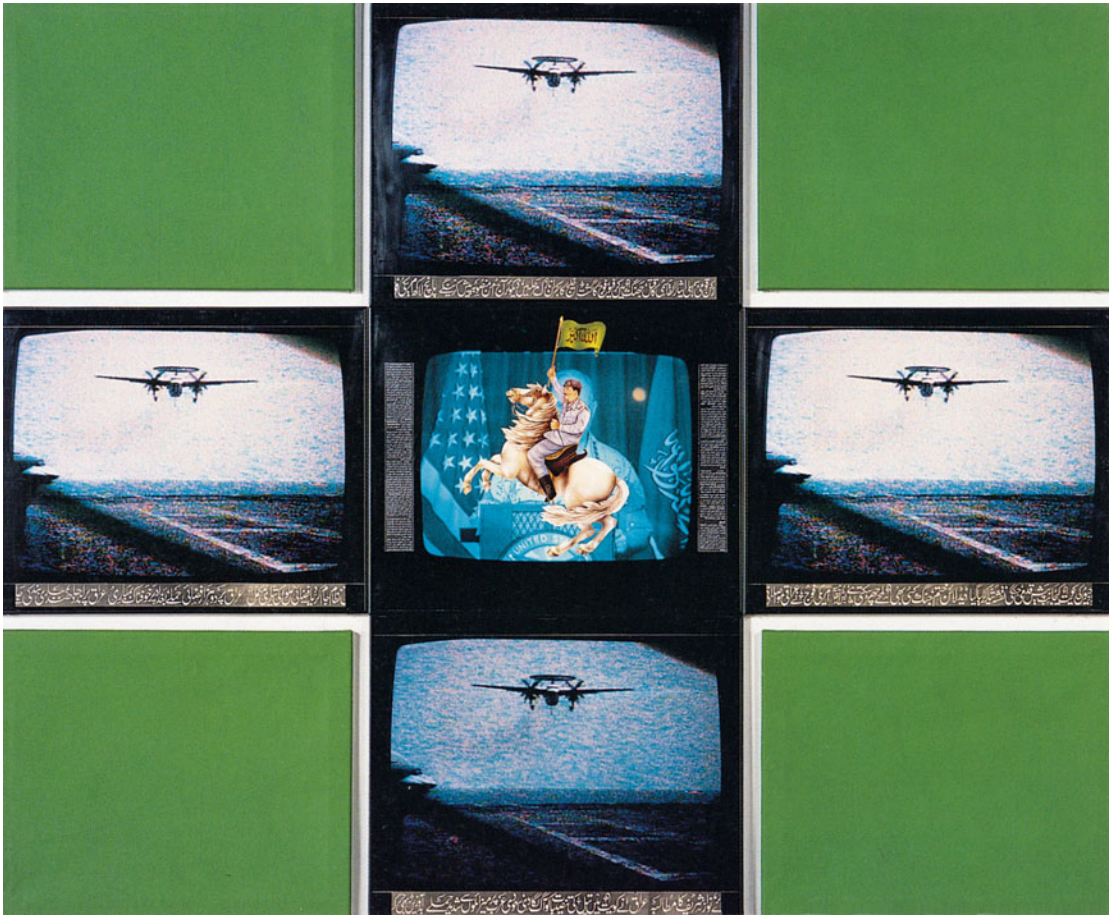


PLATE 16. *Rasheed Araeen*, White Stallion, *1991. Color photographs, collage, acrylic on plywood. 162.5 × 198 cm. (Collection of the Imperial War Museum, London. Courtesy Rasheed Araeen.)*

PLATE 17. *Naiza H. Khan,* Henna Hands, *2002. Stenciled henna paste on wall. Installation, Cantt Station, Karachi. (Courtesy Naiza H. Khan.)*

PLATE 18. *Naiza H. Khan,* Henna Hands, *2002. Stenciled henna paste on wall. Installation, Cantt Station, Karachi. (Courtesy Naiza H. Khan.)*

PLATE 19. *Naiza H. Khan, studio view of* Hendrickje's Robe *(left) and* Bilquis/Bathsheba *(right), with reference images by Rembrandt in center, 2006. Charcoal and acrylic on Fabriano paper. 180 × 150 cm. (Courtesy Naiza H. Khan.)*

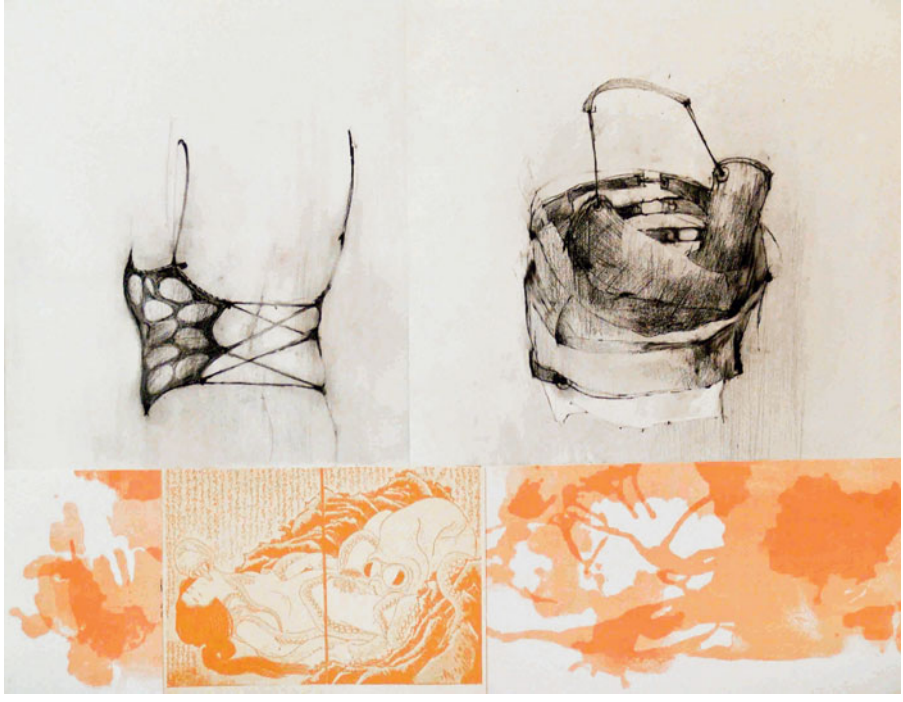


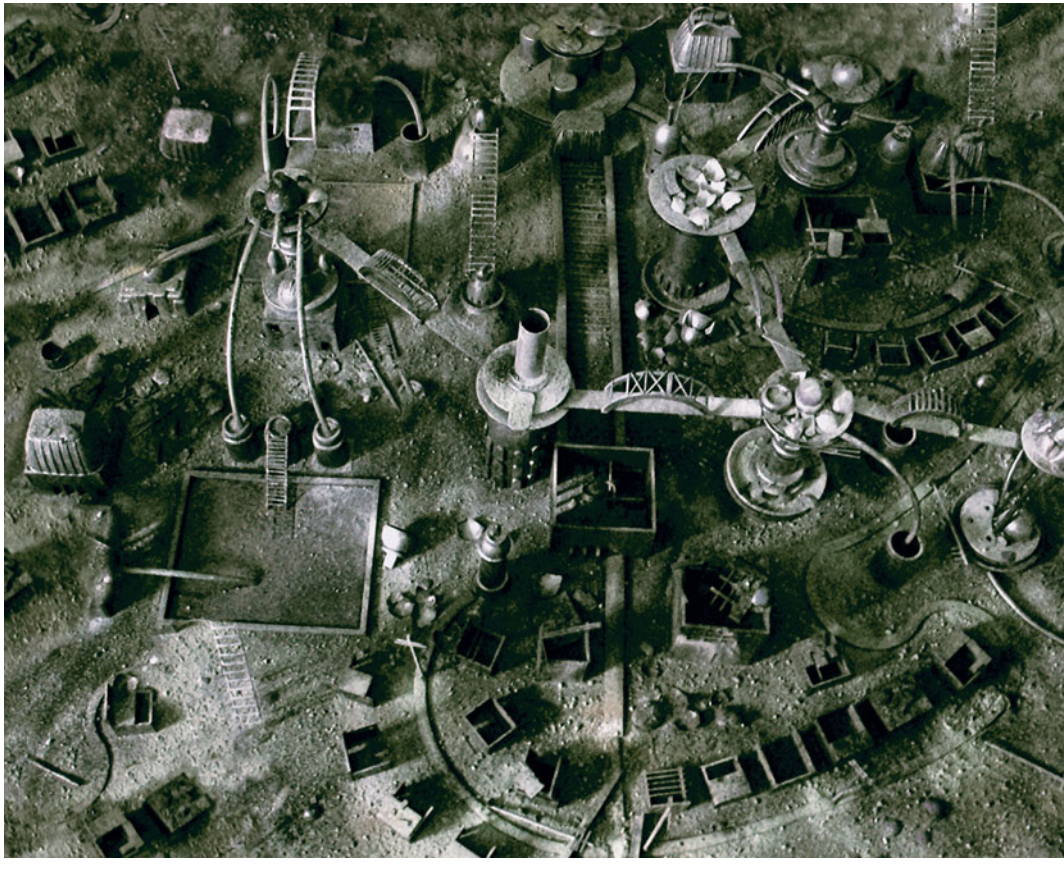
PLATE 20. *Naiza H. Khan,* Two Corsets, *with "quotation" from Hokusai, 2005. Conté, silkscreen print, inkjet print on paper. 102 × 130 cm. (Courtesy Naiza H. Khan.)*

PLATE 21. *Imran Qureshi*, Wuzu, Singapore Biennial, *2006. Opaque watercolor on wall. Installation, Masjid Sultan, Singapore. (Courtesy Amna Naqvi and Corvi-Mora, London.)*

PLATE 22. *Aisha Khalid,* Gul-e-lalah, *2004. Opaque watercolor on* wasli *(paper). 55.9 × 42.9 cm (framed). (Courtesy Corvi-Mora, London.)*

PLATE 23. *Saira Wasim,* Round Table Conference, *2006. Gouache, gold, and ink on* wasli *(paper). 21.5 × 22.8 cm. (Courtesy Saira Wasim. Photograph by Haroon Chaudhry.)*

PLATE 24.
Samina Mansuri, Olara 5, *2008 (overall and detail). Giclee print. 118 × 89 cm. (Courtesy Samina Mansuri.)*



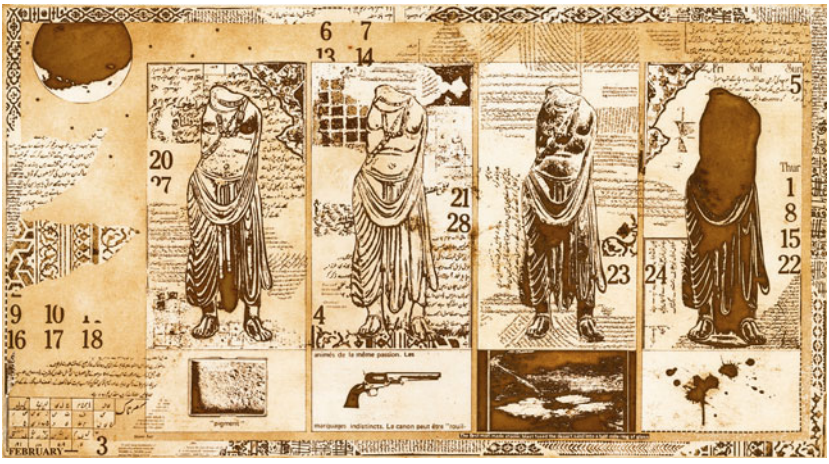


PLATE 25. *Anwar Saeed,* Different Possible Endings for a Story, *1993 (overall and detail). Photo etching and aquatint. 36 × 66 cm. (Private collection. Courtesy of Anwar Saeed.)*

PLATE 26.
Rashid Rana, I Love Miniatures, *2002 (overall and detail). C-print (Diasec), gilt frame. 62 × 46 cm (without frame). Edition of 20. (Courtesy Rashid Rana and Green Cardamom, London.)*

PLATE 27. *Risham Syed*, Tent of Darius, *2009 (overall and details).*
Five hand-embroidered vintage army coats, acrylic on canvas on board. 221 × 264 cm.
(Courtesy Risham Syed and Talwar Gallery, New York/New Delhi.)

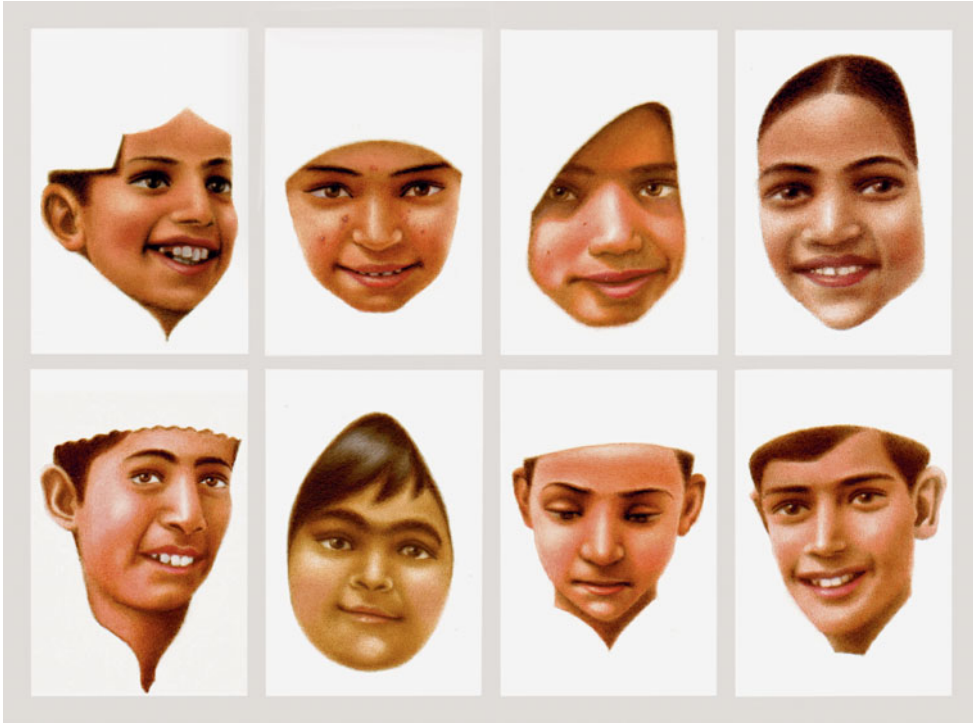


PLATE 28. *Hamra Abbas, details of portraits from* God Grows on Trees *and photograph of Lahore street, 2008. Gouache on* wasli *(paper), C-print. 3.5 × 3 cm (× 99) and 90 × 102 cm. (Courtesy Hamra Abbas and Green Cardamom, London.)*